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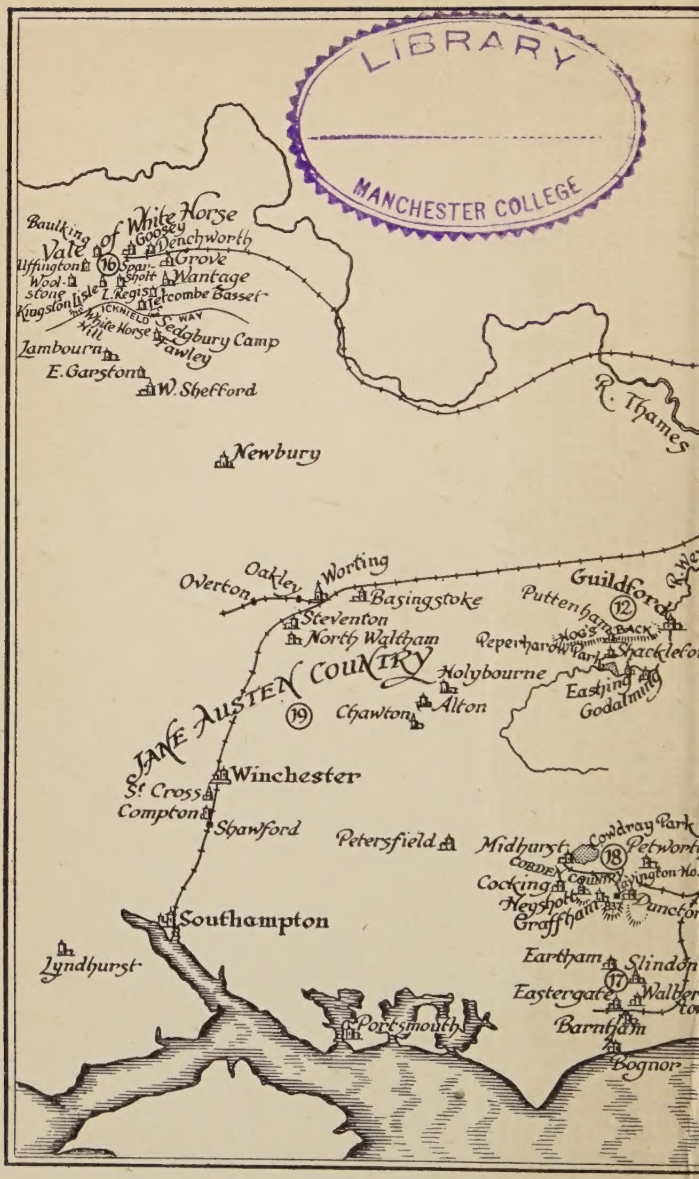

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WALKS ABOUT LONDON

WALKS ABOUT LONDON

By

W. A. HIRST

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PREFACE

If these descriptions of rambles through some of the most delightful scenery in England help to foster the taste for country walks, my object will have been attained. The plan is to select a few of the innumerable attractive routes in or adjacent to the Home Counties and to describe the scenery and the literary and historical associations. Like the Socratic form of education, it is merely drawing out what is already there; the woods and fields and the county histories are open to everyone; they have a store of ready wealth, and the pedestrian has merely to fall to. Some passages are quoted by all topographers—myself included—for where they *do* agree in topography, their unanimity is wonderful, but I am familiar with all the books from which I quote, and I believe my quotations are correct. Easy writing, according to Sheridan, makes hard reading, but it may be hoped that pleasurable writing will not make unpleasant reading, for it has certainly been a great pleasure to make the pilgrimages and to write the descriptions. And at all events, whatever the book may do, the walks themselves can give nothing but delight. In compiling the verbal index, I am indebted to my wife for valuable help.

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INTRODUCTION

Our ancient English dower is the countryside. He who would see England must walk by the broad highway, by winding lanes and bridle-roads, by footpaths and by stiles, over downs and commons, through woods and glades. The pedestrian, having nothing to "put up," is independent, able to stop or turn aside at will, and, moving slowly, he can see everything and identify every house or copse, or hamlet marked on the map, which should be always in his hand. There is an art in walking, as in everything else; the trouble of making a plan is amply rewarded; every traveller, before starting on a journey, should manufacture his own guide book and thus miss no object of interest.

The intention is to offer suggestions which may be helpful to anyone who wishes to see England's green and pleasant land in the best of all ways. These walks, as a rule, are not very long, seeing that it is useless to make a toil of pleasure and also to lose many of the features of the journey by hurrying over great distances and incurring fatigue rather than recreation. And those which may appear long can easily be divided into two, or, again, some that seem too short can be combined with another by a more vigorous pedestrian. The object is pleasure and health and knowledge, and each one will follow his own bent.

One of the most fascinating aspects of walking is literary geography. We constantly pass through scenes haunted by great men and places ruled as their demesne. If a poet is not made, at least he is formed by the place in which he is born, and few poets or novelists have done their best work save in writing of the scenes and events where their wax-like young minds received the impressions which remained indelible throughout their lives. Scott for Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, Dickens for Kent, Tennyson for Lincolnshire, Mrs. Gaskell for Cheshire, George Eliot for Warwickshire, Guy de Maupassant for Normandy, Mr. Thomas Hardy for Wessex, Mr. Arnold Bennett for the Five Towns—all these have a preference, and in that sphere they feel a rapture which they seldom recapture when going further afield and describing lands which were not seen in those early impressionable years. And by going into their country we make their books living things and they become "the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." Thus we travel through lands renowned in story and the spell of poetry and romance is ever upon us.

It is, then, necessary to know the works of the writers, great and small, whose homes we visit, and also to make ourselves familiar with the descriptive literature relating to our pilgrimages. Though much has been done, much still remains, for local histories are very unequally distributed. Many counties, as Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey, are well off in that respect, while others

such as Cambridgeshire and, possibly, Huntingdonshire, have no county history at all. There is much need that local antiquaries should set to work at the records of their parishes and thus collect material for county histories.

The first requisite of the pedestrian is an ordnance map, one inch to the mile. These maps are in considerable need of revision, but they enable anyone to find his way about without difficulty, and to identify every copse, and stream, and great house. He should also take a Methuen's "Little Guide" of the county in which he is walking; these small and handy books are excellent. This is all he need carry, except—an important item—the notes which he has made himself. It is a good plan to cover half of a sheet with notes, leaving the other half blank for additions which he may wish to make while seeing the object of interest. Most of the walks here described can be done by a Londoner in a single day, but some few necessitate spending a night or two out. In such cases it is preferable to carry the small kit in an Army haversack; it is much less burdensome than a knapsack.

The inns of the People's Refreshment House Association are cheap and good, and may be found in many villages. They are also good places for luncheon. Although rural catering has improved of late years, it still leaves a good deal to be desired, for landlords still are much more ready to supply alcohol than to provide a comfortable meal. It is astonishing, when a meal of bread and cheese is ordered, to find invariably a piece of unappetising American cheese placed on the

table. Too often is it the case in rural districts that rural products are hard to come by, and are often brought from the town, or even from Chicago.

Some people have an objection to the high road and demand nothing but footpaths. In my view the high road is best of all; in winter it is very much the best; it is always the most interesting; the churches and villages usually lie along it, and one seldom loses one's way. Such a road as that from Newmarket to Cambridge affords the finest possible going. In winter the best footpaths are often ankle-deep in mud, and frequently lead into a Slough of Despond where cattle have poached every available bit of ground from hedge to hedge. And at the best of times footpaths have a way of petering out in the open fields, or stopping short before a long and impenetrable hedge, or taking you into a farmyard inhabited by a muckle dog. Undoubtedly footpaths are good in their place and enable you to see pretty scenery which would otherwise be missed, but the high road must form the backbone of a tour.

Mr. Belloc says that a sacredness everywhere attaches to the road; it is the oldest of our institutions, and religion, letters, customs, community of language and idea follow the road. As the hymn says, we are travelling in the way our fathers trod; our prehistoric ancestors followed the tracks smashed by the beasts as they went to find water, and we still tread the route by which the Iceni went westward, or the dry high road on the downs which once was used

for the carriage of ore and ingots, and much later by the pilgrims to Canterbury. It is the high road rather than the footpath way that all great tramps, such as Borrow, have chosen. On the high road, too, it is possible to keep up a level pace of four miles an hour, which is almost impossible upon the inferior going provided elsewhere.

Some will object to the high road on the score of the motor nuisance. It is true that on the best high roads the pedestrian is often bothered by a rush of cars, which at night in particular are most trying, sometimes driving him into a wet and muddy ditch, but, except on Saturdays and Sundays and some special occasions, conditions are generally tolerable even on the most popular roads. And many good roads, e.g. the Worth route to Brighton, have comparatively little traffic. The worst grievance against motors is that a newspaper outcry has led the authorities to drive broad, straight, ugly roads through the countryside. These are detestable, for they deface our beautiful country and encourage the mania for speed. The dangers to pedestrians, to children and villagers in general, and even to motorists themselves, are manifest. Our sinuous roads and high hedges, and quaint old houses in the villages, giving sharp angles to the thoroughfares, are exactly what is wanted for motor traffic. Sharp turnings and blind corners are favourable to reasonable speed and safety.

I am not one who views the motor-car with hostility. The motor-car has given us good roads. The pedestrian is no longer choked with dust in

summer or bedabbled with mud in winter. The inns have also been greatly improved. Most motorists drive considerately and not unfrequently offer a lift, which is sometimes most welcome. On the other hand, there is nothing to be said for the wantonly noisy and furiously driven motor-cycles.

There is no need to encumber the pedestrian with much advice as to what to see and do during his rambles. He will, of course, follow his own bent. The chief object of interest, often the only one, in the village is the church. England is blessed beyond all nations with innumerable old churches. More often than not we shall find in our village a building which, for perhaps seven hundred years, has been the focus of all the history and most of the life of the little community. We can here read the records of the manors and chief families of the district, we can often see the part which the locality played in the Reformation and the Great Rebellion; we can note the changes in the fashion of sculpture, glass, woodwork, costumes and armour. The epitaphs reveal to us the simple and brief aspirations of the Middle Ages, when the welfare of the soul was the one concern; the struggles after expression in Elizabethan times, when the English tongue was developing from a vernacular into a literary language; the quaintness of the seventeenth century, when we find many copies of verses which might have been written by Cowley or Quarles; the rotund pomposity of the eighteenth, the verbosity of the early nineteenth, and the unemotional brevity of recent times. The church

is first almost always, but all other objects of interest, as far as I have noticed them, are described.

Enough has now been said to set the traveller on his way. If the following pages help to make his journey more enjoyable, so that, besides enjoying each rural sight, each rural sound, he also captures the various associations which make our island a place of perpetual delight, my task is smoothly done and I wish my readers as much enjoyment from their rambles as I have derived from the peregrination of the fair counties of Hertfordshire, Surrey, Kent, and their neighbours.

I

A HERTFORDSHIRE WALK

BY KNEBWORTH AND WELWYN

A MORNING in early summer is the best time for this walk. From Knebworth Station on the L. and N.E. Railway, a lane leads uphill to the village, which we reach in about a mile, and, bearing to the left, pass through the park gates on the right. Following the drive we soon cut into a delightful chestnut avenue, at the end of which appears the house, fantastic, bristling with turrets and cupolas, and standing in well-kept gardens. Not much remains of the ancient Tudor mansion, for three sides of the quadrangle were pulled down by Bulwer-Lytton's mother (from whom he inherited the estate), and the remainder was much altered by his son, the Governor-General of India. Orderly pedestrians are allowed considerable latitude, and may wander about the park almost at will. The drive circles round the church, and away to the left may be seen the mausoleum which was built by Mrs. Bulwer. She died in 1843, and was buried here; the dignified epithet by her son states that "she saved in luxury to be liberal in distress."

The church is open, or, at least, the key may be

found in a box in the porch; it has a superb Elizabethan pulpit in carved oak, and a good brass to Sir Rowland Lytton (*d.* 1582). Indeed, the chief feature is the Lytton Chapel, where many members of that family lie buried, and those who died about the date of Queen Anne stand or lounge, magnificent in marble, in full dress and bewigged, according to the taste of the time.

Knebworth is full of literary associations, which all gather round the central figure of Edward Bulwer, first Baron Lytton, novelist, poet, dramatist, orator, Cabinet Minister—surely he was one of the most brilliant and versatile of those men who do many things well but cannot quite attain to the highest class in anything. As a novelist he came nearest to the highwater mark, trying all kinds, succeeding in all, but just missing the immortal touch. Those who have not read "My Novel" should try it. The "New Timon" is a brilliant verse satire: in it he attacked Tennyson very roughly as "Miss Alfred," who retorted with equal roughness, calling Lytton "the padded man that wears the stays"; the retort appeared in *Punch*, but Tennyson magnanimously refused to republish it.

Lytton loved Knebworth, though he constantly complained that the expense of the upkeep was as great as the rents, and it was here, in 1850, that a notable amateur company came to perform "Every Man in His Humour," the cast including Charles Dickens, his wife, Miss Hogarth, John Forster, Douglas Jerrold, John Leech, and Mark Lemon. They afterwards toured the country to

raise funds for the well-meant Guild of Literature and Art, which aimed at establishing collegiate residences for poor members of those crafts, and was enthusiastically supported by Dickens and Lytton.

Macaulay threw cold water on the Guild scheme, but wrote politely: "If your project turns out well, I shall have real pleasure in taking to myself the shame of an erroneous prediction." He elsewhere remarks that literary people ought to see as little of one another as possible—a thesis which would make an excellent subject for a debating society. The Guild turned out a complete failure, although Lytton provided free sites for the buildings on his own estate.

Many as were Lytton's distinctions, he obtained little enjoyment from life, partly owing to his egoism, though he was probably happiest at Knebworth, whence he writes: "My time at present is occupied in repairing farms, opening schools, etc. There are two things in life which bring a man in connection with that grave happiness called Duty. One is a fortunate marriage, the other a landed property. As I missed the one, I am pleased to see that the other compels one, *nolens volens*, to rouse oneself from one's egoism, and, to one's amaze, act for other people."

Lytton's marriage was indeed conspicuously unfortunate among the many unfortunate marriages of literary men. Perhaps Macaulay (a bachelor) would have said that literary people ought to marry as little as possible. Lytton's wife seems to have been one of those appalling people who are not quite mad enough to be kept

in an asylum but quite mad enough to be a nuisance to all their associates. She has had her partisans, but it must be admitted that when a man stands for Parliament and his wife appears before the electors to denounce him publicly, such a step is not likely to regain his affections. And that is what Mrs. Bulwer (afterwards Lady Lytton) did.

Leaving Lytton's matrimonial troubles, we may now follow his favourite walk along the lime avenue, which leads us through a lodge-gate to a fairy-like lake, where he often composed poetry; one of the main pleasures of a pedestrian is to haunt the goodly surroundings which have helped the writer in his task. We then turn back, and, again passing the lodge-gate, turn to the right along a faint track which leads us past the fragment of a ruined chapel. Within half a mile a gate by a cottage brings us out on the Hitchin road.

Here, exactly opposite, a most attractive path opens through the woods which takes us among green copses with dazzling carpets of bluebells, where the hand of the woodman has been busy. The tempting green drive to the right, and all other by-paths, must be resisted, and, keeping a straight course, we come into a lane, and, bearing to the right, follow its most tortuous course over a high tableland with fine views to St. Paul's Walden, a pleasant village dominated by a church perched well above it. There is now an excellent walk of nearly a mile to Whitwell, by a lane which skirts a stately park, the property of the Earl of Strathmore. His ancient and famous family has recently intermarried with Royalty.

Crossing the infant River Maran, we turn sharp

to the left instead of entering Whitwell, and in half a mile turn (right) through the park gates of Kimpton Hoo, the seat of Viscount Hampden. The first Viscount Hampden, once Mr. Brand, Speaker of the House of Commons, well earned his peerage. Early in 1881 Parnell had carried obstruction to its spring-tide and forced the House to sit for forty-one hours. All, except the Irish, were horrified at the failure of Parliamentary government. But Mr. Brand, who was descended from John Hampden, with dauntless breast withstood the tyrant Parnell, and (quite illegally) declared the sitting at an end on his own responsibility. Overwhelming cheers greeted this announcement; shortly afterwards Gladstone introduced rules of procedure and the plague of obstruction was stayed.

The drive of Kimpton Hoo leads uphill through a well-timbered park, and we have an opportunity of admiring the comfortable-looking red-brick house, which, as may be afterwards learned from a tomb in Kimpton Church, was built by a certain Sir John Keate towards the end of the seventeenth century. We then follow the drive downhill, and, leaving the park, come into the village of Kimpton; the church has good woodwork and other interesting features; the houses are, in part, grouped round a tiny square green.

We strike left, along the Codicote road, but do not actually pass that village, as our course to Welwyn, which passes the picturesque Kimpton Mill, lies almost entirely in the Maran Valley. After a walk of some three miles we ascend a hill and see Welwyn at our feet in a tree-clad valley;

it is a pretty little town of about 1,800 inhabitants. Welwyn, however, has a daughter town, situated about two miles to the south, which dreams of expanding into a Garden City of 50,000 inhabitants. It is out of the beat of to-day's walk, grateful though the fare of its Cherry Tree Restaurant would be to the wearied traveller.

The literary flavour of our walk is kept up by the Rev. Edward Young, famed for "Night Thoughts," who was Rector here from 1730 to his death in 1765. Thackeray and George Eliot have made merry over him as a sycophant, and there is no doubt that he assiduously courted the great, after the fashion of his day, and that, in his early life, the profligate Duke of Wharton, and, in his later the unprincipled Bubb Dodington, did him little credit as patrons. Nevertheless, as his biographer says, "with all his defects he was a man of genius and a poet," and he seems to have been amiable though disappointed. Well-connected, educated at Winchester and Oxford, and a Fellow of All Souls, he made great efforts to succeed as a man of letters and panegyrist of Walpole and other politicians, but with all his brilliance he contrived to miss fire. His epigram on Voltaire was much admired:

"Thou art so witty, profligate and thin,
At once we think thee Milton, Death and Sin."

He took orders when over forty and hoped for good preferment, but never got anything better than Welwyn, where he remained the rest of his life, amusing himself with literary friends, meditating on the vanity of earthly hopes, and com-

posing "Night Thoughts," which delighted his age and long maintained a solid reputation. The line, "Procrastination is the thief of time," would alone keep his memory green.

He had a great vogue in Germany, where he was long considered superior to Milton, and in France it is said that the sentimental and bloodthirsty Robespierre kept "Night Thoughts" under his pillow. The attitude of Young seems to have been that, having done everything to command success and deserve it, and yet having failed to get preferment, he had a right to be gloomily sententious. In that line he did his work well, for he had considerable literary skill, and his plays and satires were also esteemed in their day. He planted an avenue of limes which survives, rebuilt the church steeple, and seems to have been above rather than below the standard of the times as a country clergyman. Dr. Johnson and Boswell visited Young's son at Welwyn in 1781.

Turning down a narrow street by the Rose and Crown, we make our way to the station; it is a long journey, of which the chief feature is the lofty viaduct of forty arches which carries the L.&N.E.R. across the River Maran. The round is about twelve miles.

II

A SOUTH HERTFORDSHIRE WALK

BARNET AND ITS BATTLEFIELD

ALIGHTING from the motor-bus or tram at Barnet Church, we take the Great North Road, which runs through Chipping Barnet. The name shows that we are at an ancient market-town, for *ciping* is the Anglo-Saxon word for market, and it appears in Chipping Ongar and many other old towns. Barnet was granted a market in the reign of Henry II. Just beyond a ginger-beer factory is a road to the right leading to Monken Hadley. This place is the beginning of the battlefield, for the extreme right of the Lancastrians and the extreme left of the Yorkists met at this spot. It is worth while to go a quarter of a mile out of our way to see the brasses at Monken Hadley church. The battlefield presents no difficulties, but it is necessary to recapitulate the events that led up to it.

In the early part of 1471 Edward IV was a refugee with his brother-in-law, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Charles lent the exile some money, with which he hired several Dutch ships and fourteen belonging to the Hanseatic League. On March 11th he set sail with 1,200 good men, English and foreign. The next day he touched

at Cromer, but found that his enemies were gathering in strength in East Anglia; he passed north and landed at Ravenspur on March 14th. The enterprise might well seem desperate, but in reality it was not so. England was practically ruled by Warwick, who was unpopular and also deficient in military skill. Henry VI was weak-minded; Margaret, his wife, was in France, and Clarence, the brother of Edward, was likely to desert Warwick. Edward marched by Beverley to York, then to Wakefield, Doncaster, Nottingham, Newark, Leicester, Coventry, Daventry, Dunstable, and St. Albans, and on April 11th entered London. At Coventry he had been in touch with Warwick, who avoided an engagement. Shakespeare, in the rather dull chronicle-play, makes the Kingmaker explain:

> "Alas! I am not coop'd here for defence:
> I will away to Barnet presently,
> And bid thee battle, Edward, if thou dar'st."

Here, at Coventry, Edward had been joined by "false, fleeting, perjured Clarence."

By this time Warwick had reached St. Albans, and on April 13th posted himself on Hadley Green to the north of Barnet. His position was very simple; his line lay along the Great North Road, the right wing at the junction with the Hadley road and the left close to what is now the beginning of Wrotham Park. The men looked down-hill over the Enfield Chase, now, of course, enclosed, and the road is fringed with houses and gardens. An obelisk, erected in 1740, indicates roughly the Lancastrian centre,

Edward had arrived at Chipping Barnet from London. When it was dark he marched along the little valley and drew up his army parallel to that of the Lancastrians, but his right overlapped and his left was overlapped. The battle took place the next morning, Easter Day, April 14th. It was a misty morning, and the unwary Warwick must have been surprised to see his enemies so near. However, the Yorkist left wing was completely crushed, and fled to London, bearing tidings of defeat. But Edward's brother, Richard, was victorious on the right, and Edward in the centre attacked Warwick. Margaret of Burgundy, Edward's sister, wrote with sisterly pride that Edward "se porta honnestement," and the whole left and centre of the Lancastrians being bent right back, the skill of the two Yorkist brothers prevailed. Warwick was killed and his troops fled. According to Shakespeare, he made a pathetic dying speech:

> "Lo! now my glory smear'd in dust and blood;
> My parks, my walks, my manors that I had,
> Even now forsake me; and of all my lands
> Is nothing left me but my body's length."

The battle lasted under three hours. Warwick had hoped that Edward would march out of Barnet to the attack, and thus expose his flank. But Edward knew better, and chose instead the slight handicap of charging up a slope, doubtless also having the advantage of a surprise.

The more one studies the turbulent chronicles of the fifteenth century the more one is impressed with the military genius of Edward IV. Several

times he was faced with overwhelming political difficulties, but he relied on his military skill to extricate him from them, and he never relied in vain. Each unerring blow which he struck either ruined his enemy completely or was the first step in a short combination which had that effect. He was rapid in movement and inflexible in resolution, a master of tactics and strategy. As to the numbers of the combatants, one thousand are said to have been slain. Edward brought with him 1,200, and must have had considerable reinforcements from Clarence and others. The whole front was not more than half a mile in length, and so the numbers may not have been very large, probably not more than 5,000 on each side.

It is right to say that Sir Charles Oman, who is undoubtedly the first living authority on the subject, and who has very kindly corresponded with me at some length on Barnet lore, gives a much larger estimate of the numbers—"12,000 for Edward and a little more for the Lancastrians." He also proves that the battle plan given by Sir James Ramsay is by no means accurate. Sir Charles bases his view on the "Arrival of King Edward," probably the best authority, which was written immediately after the battle. It will seem very rash not to accept in every detail the judgment of the best historian. But a humble participant in the Great War and one who also followed the Boer War from day to day, may perhaps be forgiven for agreeing with one of George Eliot's characters that "history is a process of ingenious guessing." The estimate (given by a combatant) of only 1,000 killed altogether and the limited

size of the battlefield, coupled with the scanty population of England and the enormous expense incurred in hiring archers, give some plausibility to the "guess" that the numbers engaged were not very large.

The scanty authorities for the Battle of Barnet are given by the late Sir James Ramsay, and probably his elaborate history, which has plans of every battlefield, will satisfy the general reader's appetite for detail anent the Wars of the Roses. Narratives, usually very brief, are to be found in Wavrin, a Flemish chronicler, who was alive when the battle was fought; John Warkworth, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, a later contemporary; "The Historie of the Arrivall of King Edward," a valuable official narrative, drawn up under the supervision of Edward himself; Fabyan, a relatively well-known chronicler, who wrote some twenty years after the battle; and Hall. This last chronicler, whose name will be familiar to readers of "Marmion"—"unnamed by Holinshed and Hall"—is probably the only one in the above group whose name means anything to the average man; he did not publish his narrative till seventy years after the event.

Finally, to revert to a more familiar (and contemporary authority), the "Paston Letters," we may extract a brief allusion by Sir John Paston, who fought on the losing side and whose brother was "hurt with an arow on hys ryght arme." It is perhaps worth remarking that our ancestors employed simplified spelling and that it is strange to find intelligent moderns seeking to dig up a thing which is not only dead but also damned.

Sir John says: "Ther was kyllyd uppon the ffelde, halffe a myle ffrom Bernett, on Esterne Daye, the Erle of Warwyk, the Marqweys Montacu, Sir William Terrell, Sir Lewes Johns, and dyverse other Esquiers off owr contre, Godmerston and Bothe. And on the Kynge Edwardes partye, the Lord Cromwell, the Lord Saye, Sir Omffrey Bowghsher off owr contre, whyche is a sore moonyd [very rich] man her, and other peple off bothe partyes to the nombre off mor then a m[l] [thousand]."

However, a novelist who appears to be a permanent "best-seller," has written a spirited account of the battle. Many people will probably be surprised to hear that, within the last fifty years or thereabouts, no less than ten quite distinct editions of Bulwer-Lytton's "Last of the Barons" have been published. Like much of his work, the book smells of the lamp, but it bears the stamp of competent literary craftsmanship. In obedience to the supposed necessities of romance, Bulwer makes his hero, Warwick, fight to the last, and fall after performing prodigies of valour. This is not in accordance with fact. Although Warwick was not a great general, the charges of cowardice at Barnet, which have been brought against him, do not seem to be justified, but the records show that when he saw his forces hopelessly crushed, he, very properly, took to flight. Sir C. Oman says: "But there the fate met him that had befallen so many of his enemies, at St. Albans and Northampton, at Towton and Hexham. His heavy armour made rapid flight impossible; and in the edge of Wrotham Wood he was surrounded by the pursuing enemy, wounded, beaten down,

and slain." By the year 1471 the skill of the armour-maker had defeated its own object and the weight of the plated mail had become a danger to the wearer. Both at home and abroad the chroniclers have curious tales of knights who perished helplessly, half smothered in their armour.

The Battle of Barnet was "decisive," according to the standard of the Wars of the Roses, i.e. it brought about a settlement that lasted something over ten years. It is true that on the very day of Barnet, Queen Margaret's force had landed at Weymouth, but this action was a crushing blow to her hopes, and the rapid Edward, setting out at once from London, had merely to pursue his new enemies to Tewkesbury, where their total defeat was a foregone conclusion. Mr. Belloc—that Napoleon of war or topography—observes: "It was this action at Barnet which was the single decisive blow of this short campaign, on which account it should bear the title of that battle."

Barnet is still a pleasant little town; here it was that Oliver Twist met the Artful Dodger. No one seems to have identified Mr. Bumble's town; it was probably Peterborough, which is seventy-six miles from London. Oliver, after having proceeded some miles, sat down by a milestone which "bore, in large characters, an intimation that it was just seventy miles from that spot to London," has a considerable river,—such as figures in the night interview with Monk,—and Barnet is on the high road between the two towns.

Barnet Common once possessed a notable mineral spring. Pepys gives a minute account of his potations. He drank a great quantity of the

water, and it made him feel ill. The sign of the Red Lion—which was Pepys's favourite house of call—is still in existence; Barnet, being on the great highway to the north, has always been conspicuous for the number of its inns. Probably no one but an antiquary would, to-day, seek out the healing well, which still may be seen by following Wood Street and Wellhouse Lane, but when Charles II was King the waters were highly esteemed. By the way, persons financially interested in spas must have blessed good King Charles's golden days, for, from Tunbridge Wells downwards, all the world and his wife and mistress seemed to be devoted to water-drinking, and any well with alleged healing properties was a gold-mine to its owner. Fuller says in his pleasant way: "The catalogue of the cures done by this spring, amounteth to a great number, in so much that there is hope, in process of time, the water rising here will repair the bloodshed hard by, and save as many lives as were lost in the fatal Battle of Barnet betweixt the two houses of York and Lancaster."

We leave the Great North Road for a lane branching to the left towards St. Albans, and pass the pleasant Wrotham Park. The house was built in 1754 by the ill-fated Admiral Byng; it is still in the possession of that family, being the seat of the Earl of Strafford. Nothing can better show the power of a phrase than the fact that Byng's memory is kept alive by the wit of Voltaire rather than by the great events with which he is associated. So celebrated is the *mot*, that the context may be worth giving. Candide and his

friends happened to touch at Portsmouth just in time to see the execution of Admiral Byng.

"Candide asked who was the tall man who had just been put to death with such ceremony.

"'An Admiral,' was the reply.

"'And why kill this Admiral?'

"'Because,' they told him, 'he did not succeed in killing enough people; he broke off an action with a French Admiral, and it seems that he did not come to close enough grips with his enemy.'

"'But,' said Candide, 'the French Admiral was just as far from the English Admiral as the English was from the French, was he not?'

"'Undoubtedly,' was the reply; 'but in this country we find it advisable to kill an Admiral from time to time, to encourage the others (*pour encourager les autres*).'"

It is greatly to the credit of Voltaire that he exerted himself to save the life of the unfortunate Byng, although France and England were then at war. On the other hand, the brilliancy of wit, although immortal, is sometimes superficial. Professor Saintsbury, a warm admirer of "Candide," seldom loses an opportunity of pointing out that, in his view at least, the execution of Byng *did* encourage the others. However that may be, there occurs, on the very same page of "Candide," a famous phrase which, even then, was short-sighted. England and France, it was said, were fighting over some acres of snow in Canada (*quelques arpents de neige vers le Canada*), and they were spending on the quarrel more than the whole of Canada was worth. On the contrary, as Oliver

Cromwell said of Ireland, it was a country worth fighting for.

The mansion of Wrotham was damaged by fire about 1884, and was largely rebuilt. After about a mile we take a footpath to the left, and by paths and lanes reach the main road to St. Albans, which soon takes us to South Mimms. This high-lying village is extremely pretty, and the church, which is always open, is well worth a visit. The tower and the font are the oldest parts, dating from about 1200, and there was much rebuilding done in the fifteenth century by members of the Frowyk family, who are represented, among other monuments, by a magnificent recumbent effigy of a knight in armour. On the other side of the building the figure of a skull has a mocking inscription.

We walk along the high road for nearly another mile, when we take the Shenley Road to the left, and are soon in Hertfordshire. We pursue our course uphill till we come to Ridge Hall, then, turning sharply to the left, we proceed through attractive undulating country to the outskirts of Shenley. The buildings in this parish straggle in a charming, unsystematic fashion, and many farms, cottages, a stud-farm, good houses old and new, and pleasure grounds are passed before the actual village is reached, and even then it lies coyly off the road to the left. This slight detour from the route should certainly be made, in order to see the village cage or round house, which was formerly used as a lock-up for prisoners awaiting trial at Barnet or St. Albans. This piece of masonry is beehive in shape, with a small door and two tiny

windows not more than a foot square, and it bears two grim warnings, suitable though belated, to those coming to occupy it. One is, "Do well and fear not," the other, "Be sober, be vigilant." It was cruel to put anyone in such a dark, narrow cell, and one is glad to know that by 1810 (the date of its reparation given on the wall) it was falling into disuse, though the local policeman states that the last occasion of its use was only about thirty years ago.

The road now runs by the estate of Porters, once possessed by Lord Howe, the famous admiral. He won the great victory of the First of June, 1794. He was not pre-eminent among the many brilliant admirals of the latter half of the eighteenth century, but was a man of invincible courage and, for his time, a humane commander. There is a story that, on the First of June, a sailor remarked: "I think we shall have the fight to-day; Black Dick has been smiling." Had he retained his command as Admiral of the Fleet, it is probable that the disastrous mutinies of 1797 would have been averted, for the men loved and trusted him. Unfortunately his retirement took place at the very time that the trouble became acute. The house stands well on rising ground, and the park, now used for golf, is very beautiful. Drawing near Radlett we cross the L.M. and Scottish main line and soon find ourselves on Watling Street, the most traversed by modern men of all Roman roads.

Radlett, which we have visited before,* possesses many good residences and an inn—the Red Lion—

* See pages 28-33.

which follows the excellent and happily increasing custom of supplying other necessaries besides alcohol. In 1898, at this village, important discoveries of Roman kilns were made. There is a station on the London, Midland and Scottish main line. The walk is between eight and nine miles.

III

HENDON TO ST. ALBANS

A FAMOUS MURDER

ALIGHTING at the Bell, Hendon, from a bus, we take the Mill Hill Road, a pleasant, well-wooded route. Hendon or High Down (*héan dun*) is noted in modern times for its aerodrome and also, less happily, for the innumerable small houses which have spread like a deluge over the countryside. The church is worth a visit for its monuments. Having passed Mill Hill station (L. & N.E.R.), we climb Bittacy Hill and reach the pretty residential town which is more than a mile from the aforesaid station. Mill Hill's other station (on the L.M. & S. main line) is equally inconvenient in situation. Near the junction of the main road and the road leading downhill to this latter station, a footpath will be found which gives a charming walk to Elstree through fields that, in springtime, are gay with cowslips.

At Elstree we pass from Middlesex into Hertfordshire and also come out on Watling Street, the most famous of all our Roman roads, which runs from Dover to Wroxeter in Shropshire and, unlike most of its fellows, is still in use throughout almost the whole of its course. We shall follow it for eight miles to St. Albans.

The tedium of the road may be alleviated by a great crime whose memory pervades the neighbourhood. This is the murder, on October 24th, 1823, by John Thurtell of William Weare, who is buried in Elstree churchyard. Having many remarkable features, it aroused more interest among literary men than any other private crime on record. Sir Walter Scott, Carlyle, Theodore Hook, and Borrow wrote copiously about it. Bulwer Lytton makes the murder a main incident in "Pelham." Lamb followed the fate of Thurtell with great minuteness, and among others who refer to the matter are Hazlitt, De Quincey, Byron, Hood and Thackeray.

At Elstree we may still see the Artichoke Inn, where the accomplices, Probert and Hunt, "had about four or five glasses of brandy and water." Everyone connected with the crime, guilty or innocent, showed a most Pickwickian fondness for inns and brandy and water. Then, a quarter of a mile from Elstree and about two hundred yards before crossing Medbourn Bridge, we pass a spot on the right hand side of the road called Hill Slough. Here, in a pond, we are told, "the body was found, and taken on the ladder to the Artichoke. Hill Slough, as we shall see, was Weare's second resting place, for the murderers had at first tried to hide the corpse hard by the scene of the crime.

We walk on some two miles to Radlett, and here we will imitate Sir Walter Scott and make a slight divergence from our route to visit the classic ground. The explorer should turn up the road on the left by the Red Lion and immediately

take a narrow opening to the left, which track leads in a few hundred yards to Gill's Hill Lane, still unofficially known as Murder Lane. To reach the exact spot of the murder he must take the left portion of the lane downhill. Passing two cottages on his right, he will come to the bottom of the hill and a very abrupt curve in the lane. Here, on his right, he will see a gap in the hedge—the scene of the crime.

At this spot, at eight o'clock on an October night, John Thurtell, unworthy son of a highly respectable Mayor of Norwich, slew William Weare, sharper and gambler, of Lyon's Inn. Weare is said to have cheated Thurtell at blind hookey and was also supposed, from distrust of banks which, indeed, often broke in those days, to carry large sums in notes on his person. The needy Thurtell enticed Weare to Radlett on the pretext of a shooting party at Probert's cottage, and drove him down in a gig to Gill's Hill Lane, intending to murder him there with the help of Probert and Hunt. But these other two gigmen stopped so often to drink at the Artichoke and other houses of call that they were late, and the impatient Thurtell carried out the crime alone in a singularly brutal manner. A verse of the ballad which describes the affair with Homeric directness has won immortal fame:

> "They cut his throat from ear to ear,
> His brains they battered in;
> His name was Mr. William Weare,
> He dwelt in Lyon's Inn."

This was ascribed to Theodore Hook, but the

actual author was William Webb, an acrobat who was afterwards transported. It is slightly more polished than a possibly more authentic version, which appeared in "Notes and Queries" of September 23rd, 1911—but 'twill serve.

The explorer, having feasted his eyes on "the very hedge through which Weare's body was dragged" (to quote Sir William Fraser, an enthusiastic visitor), will now turn back and pursue the lane beyond the place where he originally joined it, and very soon will see through a gate on his right a small pond. "The fatal pond," says Sir Walter Scott, "is now only a green swamp." Possibly he saw it at a time of drought, for it now has a little water. Close by may be seen the foundations—or rather the ground-plan—of the cottage that figures so largely in the trial. It was pulled down about 1888.

Here it was that the three murderers and their women-folk, after dividing some of the spoil, ate a comfortable little supper and sang songs. At the trial the servant girl was asked: "Was the supper postponed?" "No, sir," she replied, "it was pork." After the ladies had retired, the men went out, took the body from the place where it fell, put it in a sack thoughtfully purchased beforehand, and sank it in a pond near the cottage.

The murder was on Friday and the party spent a very uncomfortable week-end, for they knew they were suspected; some of the neighbours had heard a pistol shot on the fatal night, and others had found a blood-stained knife and pistol. On Monday night, therefore, they removed the

body to Hill Slough, but on Wednesday Hunt and Thurtell were arrested on suspicion, and the next day Hunt showed the officers where to find the body.

Probert turned King's evidence, and at the trial —which caused unprecedented excitement—damning evidence was put forward against Thurtell as principal and Hunt as accessory before the fact. Thurtell was condemned, and on January 9th, 1824, was hanged at Hertford, game to the last, regretting that he could not live long enough to read Pierce Egan's account of a recent prize-fight. Hunt was sentenced but reprieved, and was transported to Australia, where he "was assigned as a servant to a Mr. Jonathan Slattery at Bathurst," and survived many years. Probert (the worst of the three worthies) saved his neck for the nonce, but within eighteen months was convicted of horse-stealing and ended his career on the gallows. One is reminded of the Army adage, current early in the war, "You can get a man for a shilling, but a horse costs forty pounds."

Thurtell won considerable sympathy because he was both a sporting man and a spendthrift—a character for whom the British mob (well or ill-dressed) always has a warm corner in its heart. An indiscreet writer could mention several gentlemen of to-day as dishonest as Thurtell, though less truculent, who are popular in the lower circles of sport because they "back 'osses" and spend money freely. Borrow knew and professed to like him, and thus indulgently summed up his career: "He had a light heart, got into a scrape while in the marines, lost his half-pay, took to the turf, ring, gambling, and at last cut the throat of a villain

who had robbed him of nearly all he had. But he had good qualities."

But Borrow, who gives an inimitable Borrovian picture of him, has to own : " In the whole appearance of the man there was a blending of the bluff and the sharp." Mr. Eric R. Watson, whose masterly " Thurtell Hunt " should be read by all who list to hear the crimes of the road, declines to give Thurtell a high place in the aristocracy of crime. The whimsical De Quincey thinks he was overrated as an artist in murder : " I have found most judicious critics to agree that there was something *falsetto* in the style of Thurtell," and complains that he was " as coarse as Fuseli."

Sir Walter Scott, equally great as man of letters and man of the world, deals, in his Diary, more sensibly with the affair than any of his literary brethren. Though full of interest in it, he ridicules those who " treasure up the leaves and twigs of the hedge and shrubs in the fatal garden as valuable relics," which reminds us that the subjects of George IV and George V are equally ready to maul the bungalows and gardens where murder has been committed. He seizes the striking details with the art and judgment that have made the wild scenes in a " Guy Mannering " or " Heart of Midlothian " immortal. " Indeed," he says, " the whole history of the murder, and the scenes which ensued, are strange pictures of desperate and short-sighted wickedness. The feasting—the singing—the murderer, with his hands still bloody, hanging round the neck of one of the females, the watch-chain of the murdered man—argue the utmost apathy. . . . There was a want of foresight in the whole arrange-

ments of the deed and the attempts to conceal it, which a professed robber would not have exhibited."

Scott concludes the matter with another proof of his sagacity. "One thing," he adds, "about this tragedy was never explained. It is said that Weare, as is the habit of such men, always carried about his person, and between his flannel waistcoat and shirt, a sum of ready money equal to £1,500 or £2,000. No such money was ever recovered, and as the sum divided by Thurtell among his accomplices was only about £20, he must, in slang phrase, have *bucketed his pals*."

Mr. Watson, who has investigated the case minutely, says ditto to Sir Walter. So we may say "Well done, Sir Walter Scott!" as the stout-hearted old Borderer said to himself when he had done a stiff bout of work for the benefit of his creditors.

The Thurtell trial caught Carlyle's sardonic fancy and temporarily added some new words to the language. One witness said of the scoundrel Probert that "he always maintained an appearance of respectability, and kept his horse and gig." This criterion infuriated him, and for many years he rang the changes on "frivolous gigmanity" as typical of all that was mean and hateful in British Philistinism. The word has found its way into the dictionaries, but Carlyle has (undeservedly) lost his Victorian vogue, and probably the modern newspaper reader would be perplexed if he encountered "gigmanity" in a bright paragraph. Probably the word "respectability" would now have almost as bad a connotation.

We quit Gill's Hill Lane for Watling Street,

having laid in food for meditation to refresh us on the long journey to St. Albans, which we reach after a walk of nearly fifteen miles. This town teems with interest. *Verulanium*, on a slightly different site, was one of our chief Roman cities. Cæsar, who attacked the still older British town, bears testimony to its strength, *locum egregie natura atque opera munitum*, "a place excellently fortified by nature and art." But St. Albans leads us—from Cæsar, a martyrdom, two battles, and the great Bacon down to Lord Grimthorpe, who "restored" the Abbey—through such a throng of wonderful ghosts that its consideration must be deferred to a more convenient season.

IV

A MILTONIC WALK

FROM RICKMANSWORTH TO HAREFIELD AND UXBRIDGE

RICKMANSWORTH (let us hope that the accepted definition, Rykemereswearth—Rich-moor-meadow—is correct) is a good centre for walks, and on this autumn day our purpose is to stroll by Harefield, a place which, in addition to many other points of interest, has been illuminated by the genius of Milton, for it was there that he presented the mask of "Arcades" to the Dowager Countess of Derby. From the Metropolitan station we pass down the old-fashioned High Street, by the church, and then, crossing the Grand Junction Canal and the Colne, take the Harefield road on our right. It is a country of small hills, copses and winding lanes.

At the sign of the "Prince of Wales" a footpath appears on the right which should be taken; it cuts a little distance off the main road, which we soon regain. On the left is the large well-wooded park named Harefield Grove, where young white-faced Herefords contentedly browse on the rich grass, with a background of trees which are slowly putting on their autumn tints. It is about here

—on Woodcock Hill—that we pass over the border from Hertfordshire into Middlesex.

Harefield itself is a long straggling village of no particular beauty, and the chief object that strikes the eye is the ancient almshouses founded by the Countess of Derby, which the old ladies residing there proudly state to be 500 years old. This is an exaggeration, for Professor Dryasdust knows that the building numbers only some 300 years. The fame of the Countess, indeed, dominates the village —a fame well-deserved by one who in her youth was praised by Spenser and in her old age by Milton. So we hurry on to the south of the village to see her home and last resting place.

Harefield Church is beautifully situated in a hollow on the left of the road, and behind it we may see the site of Harefield Place, where the Countess lived during the last half of her long life. Alice Spencer, in the latter days of Elizabeth, was the wife of Ferdinando, Earl of Derby, who ended a promising career prematurely at the age of thirty-six. The poet Spenser claimed kinship with her family, "of which I meanest boast myself to be"; in "Colin Clout" he laments Ferdinando under the name of Amyntas, and praises the widow as "sweet Amaryllis." In 1600 she married Sir Thomas Egerton, afterwards Lord Ellesmere, but she retained her higher title (as ladies invariably do), and they bought Harefield Place from the Newdegate family, whose members are still Lords of the Manor at Harefield. It was then, says an old record, "a fair house, standing on the edge of the hill, the River Colne passing near the same through the pleasant meadows and sweet pastures,

yielding both delight and profit." Lysons gives a plate of the house which represents a long Elizabethan front of fantastic appearance, somewhat reminiscent of the well-known Audley Mansion, near Saffron Walden.

The second marriage was celebrated by Sir John Harington, who, commending the bride's excellent conduct during her widowhood, remarks that she:

> "In that state took such sweet state upon her,
> All ears, eyes, tongues, heard, saw, and spoke
> her honour."

Sir John Harington was a poet of importance in his day, but Criticus informs us that even the best of our writers of *vers libre* to-day could not do much worse than that.

At Harewood Place, in 1602, Sir Thomas and the Countess entertained Queen Elizabeth with great pomp, and the stout old monarch (in the last year of her life) rode from Dew's Farm, which still exists under that name, along a great elm avenue to the house, in a July deluge of rain. These "branching elms starproof," of which Milton sings, have made way for other elms; nothing remains of the house but some mounds, and even a fine cedar tree, the last link with those days, was lately blown down, and lies there an uprooted wreck.

The Victorians used fondly to believe that "Othello" was played by Shakespeare's company before the Queen on this occasion. It is practically certain that "Othello" had not been written at that date, and, in any case, the belief is based on an entry forged about the year 1836 in the Egerton Papers by Payne Collier. That eminent critic is

indeed a false prophet who has deceived many, including Masson, the erudite biographer of Milton.

This noble mansion eventually passed to Lord Chandos, a grandson of the Countess; and his widow, who possessed it, married a Sedley. He was brother to the wit, Sir Charles Sedley, and this free and easy gentleman came on a visit to his sister-in-law, about 1660, indulged in the dangerous practice of reading in bed, and was thus responsible for a fire which burnt Harewood Place to the ground. Pepys, the diarist, has a very poor opinion of Sedley, who is frequently denounced by writers of the times for "lewdness," and it is certain that Sir Charles shocked the habitués of Covent Garden and Drury Lane by his language and behaviour. To have done this is no mean feat, for the Restoration man about town was not at all prudish. On the other hand, Dryden had a high admiration of his literary taste, and a pretty song—"Phyllis is my only joy"—still keeps his memory sweet. Fifteen years later the property was sold to its original owners, the Newdegates, and they rebuilt the mansion on a site near by, but this was demolished towards the end of the eighteenth century. The modern Harefield Place, which we shall pass on our way to Uxbridge, has no connection with it.

To return to Lady Derby; she became a widow once more and lived on at Harefield, offering constant hospitality to her daughters and numerous grandchildren. During the last few years of her life (she died in 1637) a young Cambridge graduate, named John Milton, was living at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, some ten miles distant, and

wrote in her honour "Arcades," probably in the year 1634. The poet was serving his apprenticeship to the Muses at Horton, where, devoted to books and rural nature, he was learning to write an exquisite series of minor poems, of which "Comus" is the chief.

The "masque and antique pageantry," which Milton still loved, were disappearing before the rising tide of Puritanism, but the "lady of the place," Alice, Countess of Derby, was an Elizabethan and still kept up the old tradition. Henry Lawes, a great musician in the service of her family, was a friend of the poet and probably introduced him to the household of Harefield Place, and Milton wrote "Arcades," part of an entertainment here presented to the Countess.

We may take it as certain that this was an experiment to bear fruit later in the more important "Comus," produced by her children and grandchildren at Ludlow. His part is merely a little pastoral play designed to compliment the "rural queen" of Arcadia, i.e. the aged Countess, who is compared to the wise Latona, the towered Cybele, and Juno. Thanks to the classical tradition, flattery lost all its evil by losing all its grossness. The patron was then a recognised institution for poets and artists, and, though Milton probably received little or no solid recompense from them, it was natural and graceful for him to pay compliments to his great employers. But the poet's genius bursts through all shackles, and he has a magnificent eulogy of the "sweet compulsion" of music, and he praises the "smooth enamell'd green" of Harefield above all the

fabled charms of Arcadia. He pervades the whole neighbourhood, and the scenery of the Colne and Thames valleys and the uplands of Middlesex and Buckinghamshire are enshrined for ever in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso."

A year or two later the Countess died at a good old age, and we enter the church hard by where she sleeps under a stately monument. Her effigy, represented as she was in her youth in gorgeous coloured robes, lies under a fine canopy, and beneath are the kneeling figures of her three daughters. A step-daughter married a Newdigate or Newdegate (the family has compromised the spelling by adopting *both* names with a hyphen), and this fact calls our attention to the profusion of monuments in the building. The Newdigates (who bequeathed the institution of an annual prize poem to Oxford) in themselves give an epitome of the history of sepulchral art—brasses of the Middle Ages, staid tombs with alabaster figures of the seventeenth century, ponderous marbles of the eighteenth, and the plain brass plates or marble slabs of our own day. Hardly less ancient and numerous are the monuments of the Ashby family, once lords of the neighbouring manor of Brakespeare; tradition connects it with the family to which belonged Adrian IV, the only English Pope. The Newdigates have another link with literature, for their seat, Arbury Hall in Warwickshire, is described by George Eliot in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story." The inside of the church is full of solemnity, but on the outside north wall a touch of comedy is supplied by the quaint epitaph to a

gamekeeper of the Ashbys and his dog; the man "in all his actions copied Tray."

Reluctantly we leave this pleasant spot and proceed to Uxbridge; there are several routes, and though the path by Dew's Farm was ridden over by Queen Elizabeth, it is best avoided in this autumn season, being muddy and difficult. There is a road to the right by watery Denham, beloved by anglers, and a pleasant walk is afforded by the high road to the left, passing the modern Harefield Place and Uxbridge Common. The view of Harrow Hill is good.

Uxbridge is an attractive town lying on the London road; it may be called "the Meeting of the Waters," for here the Colne, Gade, Verlam, Chess and Misbourne join to form two streams; a handsome bridge passes over the main river. The town was originally called *Wex-bruge* or Great Bridge, and is said to have been founded by King Alfred. It is chiefly noted for the meeting, in 1645, of Commissioners, representing on the one side Charles I and on the other the Parliament, who were trying to arrange terms of peace. The building in which the strenuous but abortive discussions took place may still be seen—the Old Treaty House and Crown Inn. Clarendon says: "There was a fair house at the end of the town which was provided for the treaty, where was a fair room in the middle of the house, which was handsomely dressed up for the commissioners to sit in; a large square table being placed in the middle with handsome seats for the commissioners to sit." Seeing that one of the main difficulties related to Ireland, it is not surprising that the

commissioners failed to come to an agreement. In time Uxbridge has a link with Milton; some two months before the negotiations at Uxbridge began he had published his "Areopagitica," which stately appeal for a free Press was, it should be remembered, a remonstrance directed *not* against a King but against a Parliament.

The walk from Rickmansworth to Uxbridge is under eight miles. London is easily reached by Metropolitan Railway, tram or bus.

V

THE MILTON COUNTRY

CHALFONT ST. GILES AND HORTON

CHORLEY WOOD, on the Metropolitan Railway, is the station next before Amersham ; it is a walk of three miles to Chalfont St. Giles. At the outset it may be mentioned that we are starting on a long walk, but those for whom eighteen miles is too much may make two bites of the cherry by stopping at Beaconsfield and continuing from that point another day. Heading south-west we walk over little hills, well wooded with the beeches for which Buckinghamshire is famous, and pass the Vache, an old estate belonging to the Fleetwood family of whom we shall soon hear more.

We reach the pretty village of Chalfont St. Giles. Buckinghamshire must ever be associated with John Milton. A topographer remarks : " The life work begun at Horton was finished at Chalfont St. Giles." This is substantially accurate. He had published nothing till he gave the Horton poems to the world, and what he had previously *written* would not have handed down his name to posterity as a great poet. By the time he left Chalfont in 1666 he had practically finished his two epics, and " Samson Agonistes " alone remained to be written.

The first object of interest in the village is the church; it is mainly decorated. One striking peculiarity is a mural painting which represents Salome dancing before Herod and also carrying the head of John the Baptist in a charger. The font is Norman, and there are many fine brasses. The only connection of the building with Milton is the Fleetwood brass. Sir George Fleetwood bought the estate of Vache, in the neighbourhood in 1564 or thereabouts. He died in 1570, and lies under an altar tomb in the church, commemorated by brasses representing himself, his two wives, ten sons and four daughters. His great-grandson succeeded to the property, took the Parliamentary side in the Civil War, and was one of those who signed the King's death warrant. At the Restoration he lost his estate and narrowly escaped hanging, but pleaded that he had been bullied into the fatal step by Cromwell, "whose power, commands and threats"—he being then young—"frighted him into court." The terror inspired by Old Noll was admitted as a sufficient plea, and Fleetwood saved his life, though not his land.

This Regicide is by no means to be confused with his more celebrated cousin, Lieutenant-General Charles Fleetwood, son-in-law of Cromwell. The fact that George was a friend of Milton makes it likely that the poet visited Chalfont in his youth. He says in "L'Allegro":

> "Sometimes with secure delight
> The upland hamlets will invite."

The Chalfonts and neighbouring villages were

the only uplands within a day's walk or ride of Horton.

Milton himself, who had defended the execution, was hard put to escape Royalist vengeance, but after a short period spent in hiding he was allowed to make his peace, to live in London, and to write "Paradise Lost." He had finished this, his life's work, when his connection with Chalfont St. Giles was resumed.

On leaving the church we pass up the village along the Beaconsfield road, and one of the last buildings on the left is Milton's cottage. It has been the property of the nation since 1888—a sixteenth century building, of substantial appearance, with rather tall chimneys. It now forms two dwelling-houses, but probably in Milton's time it was a single tenement, and it then stood in its own grounds. In the summer of 1665 he was thinking of a publisher for "Paradise Lost," when his life was interrupted by the Great Plague. The death roll eventually reached the appalling total of over 26,000 deaths in a single month, and the blind poet lived near Bunhill Fields, where the pestilence raged with exceptional violence. He desired a country retreat for himself and family; it was natural that his thoughts should turn to Buckinghamshire, the home of his youth. Also he had a friend and pupil in the neighbourhood, young Ellwood, the Quaker, to whom he could depute the task of house hunting.

Ellwood says: "I was desired by my quondam master, Milton, to take a house for him in the neighbourhood where I dwelt, that he might go out of the city, for the safety of himself and his

family, the pestilence then growing hot in London. I took a pretty box for him in Giles Chalfont, a mile from me." It will be noticed that the Quaker dutifully deprives Giles of his sanctity.

The parlour of the "pretty box" is now sacred to Milton; the custodian has a real knowledge of his subject and tells us the gratifying fact that pilgrims from our Dominions are quite as numerous as those from the United States. The room, with its huge fireplace and oak roof-beam, is probably much as it was in Milton's day, and we may please our fancy with the picture of the poet sitting in the window ledge enjoying the summer breezes from the garden, "that whisper whence they stole those balmy spoils," and dictating immortal verse.

Among the many Miltonic treasures which are on view one of the rarest is a first edition of "Paradise Regained." It is also the most appropriate to the place, as is shown by the well-known anecdote preserved by Ellwood. He relates how Milton lent him the manuscript of "Paradise Lost," which he read carefully and returned. Milton then "asked me how I liked it and what I thought of it, which I modestly but freely told him, and after some further discourse about it, I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou hast said much here of "Paradise Lost," but what hast thou to say of "Paradise Found"? He made me no answer, but sat some time in a muse; then brake off that discourse, and fell upon another subject."

Ellwood goes on to say that when the plague had thoroughly abated (probably about the following February) Milton returned to London, and some time later Ellwood paid him a visit.

"He showed me," said Ellwood, "his second poem, called 'Paradise Regained,' and in a pleasant tone said to me, 'This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of.' But from this digression I return to the family I then lived in." The family affairs to which the young man returns are not without interest, but unfortunately he could not foresee that we would gladly sacrifice many pages of his family gossip for a very few paragraphs of "digression" into gossip about Milton.

This story adds to the charm of Chalfont, because it indicates the probability that "Paradise Regained" was begun in this very room. Milton "mused" over Ellwood's mild pleasantry and began to devise a poem with the theme, "recovered Paradise for all mankind." We know that he composed more freely in the autumn and winter than at any other time, so it is reasonable to suppose that he spent much of the autumn at Chalfont in dictating "Paradise Regained." The only inharmonious note is the strong probability that one of his "unkind" and "undutiful" daughters was most unwillingly pressed into the service.

We reach the charming little town of Beaconsfield after a walk of four miles, in the course of which we pass not very far from Jordans, the ancient place of sepulture of the Quakers, where Ellwood himself and the more illustrious William Penn are buried. Beaconsfield and Marlborough may claim to rank among the prettiest of English small towns; they resemble one another in their

broad, almost rural, main street. The inns here are an example which it could be wished all other houses of entertainment would follow; they retain their old-world beauty and provide travellers with comforts. It is a scandal to a civilised country that still many places pretending to be inns are merely noisome dens purveying nothing but alcoholic liquor, usually of bad quality.

Although this is a Miltonic walk, we must hasten to the commonplace modern church and pay our respects to two men of letters, one of whom has almost fallen into oblivion after enjoying an immense reputation in his day, while the other in his life-time with difficulty achieved fame—"*nitor in adversum*," he said, "I struggle uphill"—but this has grown so continuously since his death that Macaulay's judgment on him, "the greatest man since Milton," hardly seems a hyperbole. One was Edmund Waller, the other Edmund Burke. Both Edmunds were country squires in the neighbourhood and both devoted the main part of their energies to politics, but otherwise they have little in common.

Waller's tomb—a curious pyramid—stands in the churchyard, and, seeing that he was a contemporary of Milton, visitors will be surprised to read the claim of his epitaph that he surpassed all poets of his time—*inter poetas sui temporis facile princeps*. Absurd as this is and illustrating the fallibility of contemporary opinion, Waller was nevertheless no small force in our literature; he introduced a smoothness of metre and diction and a clarity of thought to our poetry which made him a worthy pioneer in the larger work afterwards

carried out by Dryden. And the author of "Go, lovely Rose," and the superb stanzas on Cromwell, and the lines:

> "The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed
> Lets in new light through chinks that time
> has made,"

will assuredly escape complete oblivion.

Burke is buried in the church; he is a man "whose genius was such" that a volume would be needed merely to give a sketch of him. He was an orator and statesman whose limitations are pointed out with almost uncanny clearness of judgment by Goldsmith in "Retaliation." Burke's oratory, in fact, was above the heads of the country gentlemen in the House of Commons, and he won the nickname of the Dinner Bell, because when he rose to speak the members went away to dine. But besides being an orator he became, late in life, one of the chief masters for all time of ornate English prose, and his later treatises, dealing mainly with the French Revolution, set forth maxims of the highest political wisdom in gorgeous cadences which leave the reader uncertain whether the matter or style are most to be admired.

In 1768 Burke said: "I have made a push with all I could collect of my own, and the aid of my friends, to cast a little root in the country. I have purchased a house, with an estate of about six hundred acres of land, in Buckinghamshire, twenty-four miles from London, where I now am." This was the "Gregories" (afterwards Butler's Court), near Beaconsfield—the house was burned down long ago. This country life was Burke's

main delight; here, as Lord Morley says, "he would talk of the weather, the turnips, and the hay, with the wainmen and the farm bailiff." When Burke showed Johnson his fine estate, Johnson made a Virgilian comment, "*Non equidem invideo; miror magis*"—I am not envious but I can't help feeling surprised. This remark has been variously explained, but there can be little doubt that Johnson was wondering how Burke came by the purchase money; in fact, it was largely through gifts from Lord Rockingham that Burke was enabled to live in the style of a nobleman. As is well known, Burke, like Lord Beaconsfield—another political big gun of Buckinghamshire—was in a state of constant pecuniary embarrassment.

We must now resume the Milton trail. At the east end of the town we take a lane marked "Four miles to Stoke Common." We pass the well-situated village of Hedgerley and take the Langley road to the right, emerging at last on the broad thoroughfare to Slough and Windsor. Near by is the lovely churchyard of Stoke Poges, where the poet Gray is buried; he, however, will be the occasion of a separate pilgrimage. We bear to the left through Wexham, and cross the Great Western Railway, where we get a good view of Windsor Castle. Thence through the straggling village of Langley (the church has many points of interest) we come at last into the great Bath Road, Fielding's favourite, on which we walk south-eastwards for a mile to Colnbrook.

Just as we enter this interesting little town we see on the right the road to Horton. From Stoke

Common onwards the country has been extremely flat, and so it remains, but the walk to Milton's Horton is pleasant. A deep ditch or stream runs on each side of the road, carrying off the superabundant water, as in the fen country or the low-lying parts of Somerset. The village is grouped round the junction of three roads, and in the middle of a tiny green stands a huge elm. Taking the road to the left we reach the church in a minute or two; its situation is good and shady; a small park extends by and beyond the churchyard, and the Manor House stands in the park a little way beyond the church. Architecturally the best features of the church may be seen from the outside —a fine pre-Reformation timber porch and a rich Norman doorway. On the chancel floor is a plain slab recording the fact that the poet's mother, Sara Milton, is buried here. She died April 3rd, 1637. It is a pity that the lapidary did not give the name of her father, for biographers have differed greatly as to her maiden name. Caston, Bradshaw and Jeffrey have had their adherents; Jeffrey now carries most votes. As an example of useless biographical verbiage, we may note that Masson devotes a whole page to a sentimental description of Mrs. Milton's funeral, although there is not a single fact to build upon, except that she *did* die. It would have been just as reasonable if Sir Richard Jebb had written a page on Homer's funeral.

Milton lived at Horton from 1632 to 1638 at his father's country house (*paternum rus*). Here he was training himself for his life's work, the writing of a poem which should be immortal. He tells us,

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in stately prose, of his apprenticeship: "And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy." What will seem extraordinary to the general reader is that Milton actually designed to write his poetical masterpiece in *Latin*. In his finest Latin poem he tells us that this had been his intention, but now (a year or two after leaving Horton) he was thinking of trying the ruder English language. Yet he fears that this may injure his fame, that he will win no reputation among men of other lands—*externo . . . inglorius orbi*. Fortunately he took his courage in both hands and wrote in English. Many people do not realise how modern English is as a language—as opposed to a mere vernacular, which a scholar would hardly venture to employ if he were appealing to the learned world. Bacon insisted on writing his important works in Latin, Burton wished his "Anatomy" to appear in ancient dress, and, as we have seen, Milton's faith in his mother tongue was, at first, weak. And yet Spenser, Hooker and Shakespeare had long since finished their life's work in giving forth immortal English verse and prose. It was fortunate that the Authorised Version of the Bible appeared at an opportune moment to reinforce the Moderns against the Ancients. Many erudite men preferred to hear

the Church services read in Latin. The Rubrick says: "Though it be appointed that all thiugs shall be read and sung in the Church in the English tongue, to the end that the congregation may be thereby edified: yet it is not meant, but that when men say Morning and Evening Prayer privately, they may say the same in any language that they themselves do understand." Our Revisers of to-day have preserved this Rubrick.

At Horton Milton devoted his time to re-reading almost the whole literature of ancient Greece and Rome, and also composed "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Arcades," "Comus," and "Lycidas." In the first two poems his fancy lingers on the Horton scenery. There are "shallow brooks," and deep brooks also, in abundance. The "rivers wide" are the Colne and the Thames. The musical and melancholy nightingale constantly sings at Horton, and there are many wide-watered shores. Windsor Castle is "bosomed high in tufted trees." Each rural sight, each rural sound, may be seen or heard in the country between Chalfont and Horton, except the mountains "on whose barren breast the neighbouring clouds do often rest." But a hill went a long way with literary men in pre-Wordsworthian days. The Sussex Downs about Eartham filled Cowper with a sense of awe; they are about 600 feet high. The Chilterns are quite as high. In fact, Horton, Milton's rural background, is typical English country and could be found in hundreds of neighbourhoods south of the Peak.

Sir William Jones, in the eighteenth century,

visited Forest Hill, near Oxford. Hearing that Milton had lived at Forest Hill, and observing that everything that appears in "L'Allegro" also appears at Forest Hill, he wrote an eloquent dissertation on the source of Milton's nature poetry. "L'Allegro" was written about 1633, and the poet came to Forest Hill for the first time in 1643. This shows that critics should look up their facts, even when dealing with works of the imagination.

The house occupied by Milton was demolished in 1798, and on its site is now a large house with spacious grounds. Masson says: "In the garden of this house there was shown, till the other day, the remnants of an apple tree, under which, according to the innocent style of local legends about such things, Milton 'used to compose his poetry.'" These pretty legends of poets courting the Muse *sub tegmine fagi*, under the shade of a beech or some other tree (pointed out to the tourist), are so seldom capable of proof that it is a rare and refreshing experience to visit a place like Keat's Grove, in Hampstead, where the legend can be proved by documentary evidence.

We pass the Church and soon bear to the right towards Wraysbury, of which the chief interest is that it is near Magna Charta Island. Within a mile of Horton we come to Wraysbury station, on the Southern Railway, whence London or its suburbs can be easily reached. The walk is about eighteen miles.

VI

A BUCKINGHAMSHIRE WALK

RICKMANSWORTH, CHENIES AND CHESHAM

THIS walk begins in Herts but nearly the whole of its course lies in Buckinghamshire. A bright February day, when our path lies over dry dead leaves, is the most suitable time for this ramble. Alighting at Rickmansworth station, we pass under the railway line and then re-cross it by a foot bridge, thus finding ourselves in Rickmansworth Park, which is well-timbered and stocked with deer. A footpath leads across the greensward till we approach the house—a plain, square edifice built soon after the year 1800—and then we bear to the left, passing through the lodge gate and emerging on the high road at the first milestone from Rickmansworth.

A considerable amount of building is in progress, and apparently the Metropolitan Railway is helping to develop the estates; the houses seem to be of good quality, but the glory of the country is beginning to depart in the immediate neighbourhood. We proceed along the road, which gradually becomes more rural, and after about a mile reach the trim village of Chorley Wood. Though picturesque, this has nothing particular to detain

the pedestrian, and the road is followed to a point where it branches to the right and quickly takes us into Chenies, nearly four miles from our starting point.

This village reposes delightfully among sloping greens and woods, near the little river Chess, and still retains the air of peaceful retirement and general welfare for which it has long been famous. Pretty cottages fringe the green, and there are two real inns, i.e. places which supply good food as well as alcohol—but the glory of Chenies is to be found on a small hill beyond, where stand the handsome Manor House, the church, and the Bedford mortuary chapel attached to it. Froude says: "The entire spot, church, mansion, cottages and people, form a piece of ancient England artificially preserved from the intrusion of modern ways." The church is open, but, unfortunately, the keys of the chapel cannot be obtained without special permission, so the casual pedestrian has to view the magnificent monuments through the rails, at a distance. Still it is possible to see the alabaster tomb with the effigies of the first Earl and Countess of Bedford, which belongs to the middle of the sixteenth century, and has been described as one of the finest of its kind in Europe, but we cannot see the droop given by the sculptor to one of the eyes of the Earl, which he lost in Henry VIII's wars.

This John Russell was a person of importance in his day, and is entitled at least to the gratitude of his family for having acquired for them great possessions, while the Russells may take a just pride in their long reputation as excellent landlords. He was a simple country gentleman of the

West of England and is typical of his times—being one of the most conspicuous of the lucky courtiers who rose from almost nothing to colossal wealth and power; this was the reward for their services to the New Monarchy. John Russell's fortune was made from the moment when his kinsman, Sir Thomas Trenchard, who through a curious accident had become the host of the Archduke Philip, introduced him to that prince. This brought Russell to the Court of Henry VII, and in due course he became the right-hand man of Henry VIII, whom he served devotedly in war and diplomacy. Verily, he had his reward. No doubt it revolted against his natural *bonhomie* that he was called upon to assist at the execution of the Abbot of Glastonbury, but what was disagreeable in his duties was sweetened by substantial compensation.

Among other good things John Russell received Tavistock, together with thirty other West of England Manors, formerly belonging to the Abbey of Tavistock, Thorney, and much land in Cambridgeshire, lately the property of the Abbey of that name, Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire, and, neither last nor least, Covent Garden with seven acres, "called Long Acre," which has ever since been very useful to the House of Russell. He also acquired an Earldom and many valuable appointments, such as High Steward of the Western Counties and High Steward of Oxford University. After this it seems almost an anti-climax to add that he advanced his fortunes by marriage, but thus it was that he obtained Chenies. The lady who lies in alabaster by his side was Anne, daughter

of Sir Guy Sapcote, who inherited the Manor of Chenies from the ancient family of Cheyne and bequeathed it to his daughter.

John managed to make the best of both worlds and all parties. In the case of a less tactful man his tight grip upon the Abbey lands might have led to unpleasantness with Queen Mary, but here again his perpetual good fortune followed him. As it began through his friendship with the Archduke, so he kept up his Austro-Spanish sympathies through life, and this was his salvation with Queen Mary, the daughter of a Spanish Princess. Indeed, the last act of the Earl of Bedford's triumphant career was to negotiate the Spanish marriage between Philip and Mary.

Many other Russells are exquisitely portrayed in marble, but the most interesting of all the monuments is the least satisfactory from the point of view of taste. As is well known, Lord William Russell was executed in the reign of Charles II in circumstances which caused him to be regarded as the martyr of English constitutional liberty. He was the son of the first Duke. Accordingly, at the west end of the chapel, we find the Duke, in a flowing wig, and the Duchess, both seated in a theatrical attitude of horror, and above them the medallions of their children, including the ill-fated Lord William. It is that pomposity of the grave which dominated funereal art during the whole of the eighteenth century, and can be studied exhaustively in Westminster Abbey.

The Russell case has many points of interest. History, we know, is chiefly written by the Whigs, and, it may be added, when historians are unani-

mous their unanimity is wonderful, for each repeats the statements of his predecessors with sheep-like docility. If Russell's actions be examined, no candid person can be surprised that he came to a violent end, for he joined in a revolutionary plot which included a design to assassinate the King and the Duke of York. Now the Whigs have many virtues and the Tories many defects, but in sportsmanship the Tories have the advantage; the Whigs when beaten always complain of the rules of the game. Strafford, Laud and Charles were put to death in defiance of law, and Macaulay seems to consider this quite right and proper, but when Lord William Russell is executed, after a perfectly legal trial, he is a martyr. The truth is that even his friend Burnet, who has left a long account of the affair, cannot show that Russell was innocent of entering into a dangerous conspiracy against Charles II. Russell had associated with criminals and rebels who, in his presence, planned an attack upon the King, and Judge Pemberton fairly enough told the jury "that a design to seize the King was surely a design upon the King's life." But subsequent historians have been more Whig than Burnet. Further, it should be remembered that, even had Russell's conviction been doubtful, he was paid in his own coin. A few years before he had taken an active part against Lord Stafford, who was wickedly executed, on perjured testimony, for supposed complicity in the Popish Plot, and his friend, Lord Essex, voted for Stafford's condemnation. It was a cruel age, and politicians took violent measures against their opponents when they had the opportunity, but it is childish to

ignore the long list of executions perpetrated by the Long Parliament, Cromwell and Dutch William, and to cry out against those—often far more legal and equitable—for which the Stuarts are responsible. It was a rough game and those who failed in it were unlucky.

Lord John Russell, of Reform Bill fame, is also buried here. His career has recently been sympathetically examined by Mr. Gooch. He was an eminent Parliamentarian at a time when the gifts that sway the House of Commons were more highly valued than they are now, and when the divinity that hedges Cabinet Ministers was less questioned. He was a stalwart champion of the public interest, as understood by the Whigs, and his self-confidence brought him unperturbed through many triumphs and many blunders.

His friend, Sydney Smith, said: "I believe Lord John Russell would perform the operation for the stone, build St. Peter's, or assume—with or without ten minutes' notice—the command of the Channel Fleet; and no one would discover by his manner that the patient had died, the church tumbled down, and the Channel Fleet been knocked to atoms." Lord John Russell had a dry and concise epistolary style. The most notable instance is his letter to the Dean of Hereford. When Prime Minister, Lord John had appointed Professor Hampden to the Bishopric of Hereford. As Hampden was vaguely suspected of "heresy" the Dean was indignant, and informed the Prime Minister that he would vote in the Chapter against the appointment. Lord John wrote in reply: "Sir, I have had the honour to receive your letter

of the 23rd instant, in which you intimate to me your intention of violating the law." He was somewhat cold and reserved in dealing with his supporters and the general public, but he would rise to a great occasion and justify Greville's verdict that he was "really a wonderful little man." This power is well described by Bulwer-Lytton :

"But see our statesman when the steam is on,
And languid Johnny glows to glorious John !
When Hampden's thought, by Falkland's muses drest,
Lights the pale cheek, and swells the generous breast ;
When the pent heat expands the quickening soul,—
And foremost in the race the wheels of genius roll ! "

Froude, the historian, visited Chenies in the wet summer of 1879, and has given in "Short Studies" a brilliant and most characteristic sketch entitled "Cheyneys and the House of Russell," in which he extols the Protestant house of Russell, the rural charm of Chenies, and, above all, the trout-fishing in the Chess, remarking that "a day's fishing at Cheyney's means a day by the best water in England in the fisherman's paradise of solitude." It is a curious mixture of eloquence, prejudice and good sense.

We now take the footpath between the church and the Manor House. It was visited by Horace Walpole in 1749. He writes : "There are but piteous fragments of the house remaining, now a farm, built round three sides of a court. It is

dropping down, in several places without a roof, but in half the windows there are beautiful arms in painted glass. As these are so totally neglected, I propose making a push, and begging them of the Duke of Bedford. They would be magnificent for Strawberry Castle." This building, which dates from about 1530, is still a farmhouse, but its condition is good. We pass along the moderately high bank that overlooks the river. At first there are meadows dotted with elms, but presently we are among the beech woods, than which nothing can be more charming when the bright February sun shines through the graceful stems, and the copper-coloured leaves afford a soft and almost dry carpet to the feet. We cross a lane and hold on for some distance; then, sharp to the right, we take a downhill footpath with a good view of the beautiful Latimer House on the other side. Here Walpole, at the time he visited Chenies, was staying with his friends the Conways. He remarks: "This house, which they have hired, is large and bad, old but of a bad age; finely situated on a hill in a beech wood, with a river at the bottom, and a range of hills and woods on the opposite side belonging to Bedford."

We now reach the village of Latimer, concerning whose catering capacities a directory makes the following curious remark: "On the village green, overshadowed by fine trees, is a pump, under an ornamental canopy, and this is the only source of refreshment possible to the visitor, for no public-house is permitted, nor is there any kind of refreshment house in the place." We then follow the high road for some four miles by the smoothly

flowing Chess, till we reach the old-fashioned little town of Chesham, whose industries are mainly connected with timber, though boots and shoes are also manufactured. There is a good church and many ancient houses face the streets unspoilt. The trains take fifty-seven minutes to cover the twenty-four miles to London. The walk is something less than ten miles.

VII

THE GRAY COUNTRY

BURNHAM BEECHES AND STOKE POGES

THE man of letters has power to invest his local habitations with a charm that endures for ages, and this has been done by Thomas Gray for a corner of Buckinghamshire. A start may be made from Burnham Beeches station on the G.W.R. A bright October day is the best time for this walk, when the woods are pranked in their autumnal tints. In pre-war days there was a pleasant footpath to Farnham Royal, but this has been obliterated by the great Slough dump, so, after admiring the fine view of Windsor Castle, we must strike northwards, and, by bearing to the right, we soon get into the lane leading to Farnham Royal and Stoke Poges. It skirts by the famous Burnham Beeches, whose beauties Gray was the first to celebrate. In his quaint way he writes: "Both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds."

For the present, however, our objective is the "country churchyard," and we make our way into Farnham Royal.

The main interest of this place is its acquisition of the Royal title. Lipscomb, the excellent county historian, says: "Bertram de Verdon came into England with the Conqueror; and held, at the Domesday Survey, the Manor of Farnham, by Grand Serjeanty, or the service of providing a Glove, putting it upon the King's right hand on the day of his Coronation, and supporting the King's right arm the same day, during the time that the Royal Sceptre is in his hand."

We then turn left by the rustic cross, which serves as a war memorial, past the modern church, and so into a road to the right, which runs along the north of Stoke Park, now a golf course; the property was purchased by Sir Edward Coke, who died here in 1634. Coke was one of the greatest among our Lord Chief Justices and writers on jurisprudence; few are there, however scanty their legal lore, who have not heard of "Coke upon Littleton," but he was a man of considerable angularity, and some will think his treatment of Sir Walter Raleigh has left a stain on his memory for which all his learning and ability will not atone. It is certain that he, the judge at the trial, called Raleigh "a spider of hell."

After about a mile we turn right (by a pair of new cottages) down a footpath to Stoke Poges Church. This is doubly consecrated ground, for it is the scene of the immortal "Elegy," which neither the schoolroom nor critics can mar. Like all Gray's works, it was carefully elaborated; we are not to suppose it to have been composed mysteriously in a single evening to the note of the "moping owl." In fact, he began it in 1742, and

did not finish it till 1750, when he wrote modestly to Horace Walpole: "You will, I hope, look upon it in the light of a thing with an end to it: a merit that most of my writings have wanted, and are like to want." Its publication was almost an accident, chiefly due to the generous appreciation of Walpole who showed the manuscript to many friends. The next year (1751) Gray, hearing that a magazine editor intended publishing it, decided to forestall him, and requested Walpole to take action, who accordingly had it published—a tiny but ever-memorable sixpenny book.

Eleven editions soon appeared, but the fastidious Gray left all the profits to Dodsley, the publisher. The eighteenth century must have been the golden age for publishers—"the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease" were very reluctant to be paid for their (sometimes) lucrative productions. Even some sixty years later the first Edinburgh Reviewers and Lord Byron (for a time) thought it beneath them to be paid for the produce of their pens, like any denizen of Grub Street. It must be said, however, that when the gentlemen writers, and especially the "noble poet," had once tasted blood they developed a strong appetite for literary emoluments. Assuredly every struggling author and journalist ought daily to bless Jeffrey, who laid down the principle that every contributor would be paid whether he liked it or not, and thus banished false delicacy from the minds of writers.

The "Elegy" was from the beginning a poem of the people, for it made a universal appeal. Even Dr. Johnson, who for some mysterious reason hated Gray, writes: "In the character of his

'Elegy' I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. . . . Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him."

Here the thousands of pilgrims who come to the shrine may see the yew trees (one said to be a thousand years old) and the "ivy-mantled tower." The neighbourhood was endeared to Gray because his mother spent the last eleven years of her life at Stoke Poges, at a house called West End, which survives, in part, under the name of Stoke Court, and on her tomb, a few yards east of the church, the poet describes her as "the careful, tender mother of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her." Some twenty years later he was brought hither to "rest his head upon the lap of earth" in the same grave. For a long time there was no memorial, but now there is a tablet, and there stands in the adjoining park a heavy monument, erected by one of the Penn family. It is not beautiful, but has some well-chosen selections from Gray's poems.

Close by may be seen Stoke Manor House, "an ancient pile of buildings," where Lady Cobham lived at that time. Gray celebrates the:

> "Rich windows that exclude the light,
> And passages that lead to nothing."

Greatly admiring the "Elegy," she sent two ladies to call on Gray, and he made the visit the subject of "A Long Story." *Then* her act was

thought a condescension, but now it is the one circumstance that keeps her ladyship in remembrance. She left Gray £21 for a mourning ring.

Returning to the church, we note the quaint glass in the cloister—one pane representing a primitive seventeenth century bicycle—and the remarkable manorial pew and the private entrance to it are somewhat unusual features. The architecture and monuments are worthy of careful study. Not least interesting among the monuments is that of Thomas Penn, son of the illustrious Quaker founder of Pennsylvania. The great William was buried at Jordans in the same county, but Thomas reposes here under the font. He and his descendants were long Lords of the Manor here. In fact, about 1760 he bought Stoke Park from Lady Cobham with part of the money which the Plantation of Pennsylvania gave him to extinguish his proprietary rights. In the south-west of the church may be seen the pew where Gray worshipped, and, as he and Horace Walpole were among the earliest admirers of Gothic architecture, it may be supposed that the Norman chancel and the Early English nave would give him satisfaction.

Gray's exquisitely finished verse was scanty in bulk, and out of that little some of the best known, apart from the "Elegy," was written at Stoke Poges. Here he composed his "Ode on Spring," his "Sonnet" on the death of his friend Richard West, "A Long Story," and, appropriately, his "Distant Prospect of Eton," where he warns us that "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Here, if a digression may be permitted, we note that Gray, in the Eton Ode, deals with

games in a vague, non-committal manner—as "urge the flying ball"—yet, on the other hand, he seems to be one of the very first among great writers to mention cricket by name. Arbuthnot indeed has a reference thirty years earlier, but who now reads Arbuthnot? Gray writes (not quite grammatically) in 1742: "There is my Lords Sandwich and Halifax, they are Statesmen: do not you remember them dirty boys playing at cricket? As for me, I am never a bit the older, nor the bigger, nor the wiser than I was then."

Gray is, with Milton, the most learned of our poets; he is a pioneer in poetry and the romantic movement, and he is surpassed by very few Englishmen as a letter-writer. And yet his fame is chiefly due to his nursling of this churchyard; by some two score stanzas he has made it a holy place for all time. The "Elegy"—transfigured commonplace and mosaic-work though it be—has become household words in almost every line, and we leave the churchyard with its spell upon us. Such commonplaces are the material of great poets.

Having thoroughly explored the poet's territory, we retrace our steps towards the high road. Still in Stoke Park, we may imagine Gray here "brushing with hasty steps the dews away"; and remind ourselves that here long ago Sir Edward Coke entertained Queen Elizabeth. We cross the high road and follow the footpath to the village. Though Gray made Cambridge his home, he was always glad to get away to Stoke and its neighbourhood, and to enjoy the beauties of Burnham Beeches. As an undergraduate, he

found mathematics distasteful, loving rather the classics and humanities and remarks: "It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly; and if these be the profits of life, give me the amusements of it." So, in the vacation, the studious but non-mathematical undergraduate thankfully received an invitation from a sporting uncle at Burnham—"who is a great hunter in imagination; his dogs take up every chair in the house, so I am forced to stand at this present writing . . . though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the fields." Everybody had gout in those port-drinking days. This domestic discomfort was of little consequence to Gray so long as he could escape to Burnham Beeches to muse and to read Virgil.

We also will follow in the footsteps of the poet, and passing up the somewhat commonplace village of Stoke Poges, we take a path to the left, just beyond the Sefton Arms, and begin a delightful ramble.

Gray, it may be noted, had not yet seen the Alps, but his description is more than half burlesque. "My comfort," he says, "amidst all this" (his uncle's dogs) "is that I have at the distance of half a mile, through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own—at least, as good as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well

as I do may venture to climb." In truth, the only risk is that of missing one's way; the hills are small, though the woods are still extensive.

We follow a lane—Gray's "green lane"—leading to a great wood, through which we pass by a footpath. Here is the scenery of the "Elegy": the "nodding beech," and presently we come to "the brook that babbles by." The poet probably proceeded no further—"his listless length at noontide would he stretch"; and, as he says, he would stay there the whole morning watching "the timorous hare and sportive squirrel gambol round me like Adam in Paradise." We, however, continue to walk over the carpet of beech leaves. All too soon appear high roads and Farnham Common, but we soon find a lane to the left, leading to Burnham Beeches; the name is used vaguely and extensively. Then to the right towards Egypt, where many pretty bungalows are springing up; and we follow the footpaths to a charming green. Then, bearing to the left, we plunge into the woods and have a good chance of being lost in the maze of paths; but, steering west, we hit a grassy track, and come to houses. The path is now a lane, and we are at the hamlet called Littleworth Common, and take a lane sharp to the left, which passes through the woods. Nothing could be better than this stroll for some two miles through beeches and birches, with dead leaves and dead bracken harmoniously blended in soft reddish orange tints. Reaching yet another golf course we find that the scenery becomes tamer and several large houses appear.

At East Burnham lived Grote, the eminent historian of Greece, and his energetic wife, whose place of abode is also noteworthy as having been the house to which Sheridan brought his beautiful young bride after the elopement. Mrs. Grote says: "It was in the course of the spring of this year [1838] that we made the purchase of a small property at East Burnham, adjoining an ancient tract of wild forest scenery, called 'Burnham Beeches.'" Here they entertained many distinguished visitors and Grote wrote the greater part of his history. Mrs. Grote published a little work, "Some Account of the Hamlet of East Burnham," but it might more correctly have been entitled "Some Account of the Twenty Years' War waged between Mrs. Grote and Lady Grenville," for there is far more related about her passages of arms with that unaccommodating patrician than of "the short and simple annals of" East Burnham. One good cause, at least, the hardy lady championed in vain. In East Burnham there was an alehouse which sold beer "usually very good, and sometimes homebrewed." But "when Grenville took possession of the property, this alehouse was let on leave to a brewer, who naturally offered more rent than a private individual could afford to pay; and from that day to this the poor people have had nothing but inferior, and in some sort unwholesome, beer supplied to them." Mrs. Grote adds: "I know that one of the most general complaints against this lady's management has always been, that she let the only public-house to a brewer, and deprived the cottagers of the chance of good liquor." This is an old rural grievance,

but neither Mrs. Grote nor any subsequent village Mrs. Hampden has availed to remove it.

At length the road takes us back to Burnham Beeches station—our starting point. Including the walk to the country churchyard, the whole makes a circuit of somewhat more than twelve miles, through beautiful country, consecrated by genius.

VIII

WENDOVER AND THE CHILTERNS

THE southern half of Buckinghamshire is one of the glories of England. The steep downs of the Chilterns, the widespread beech copses, the clear streams, the little towns with their innumerable old Red Lions and White Horses, the stately fourteenth century churches, the wild-flowers, the autumnal carpets of ruddy beech leaves—all these must strike with joy the hearts of the Sylvan gods and goddesses.

"*Latonæ tacitum pertemptant gaudia pectus.*

The pedestrian, who, like Mr. E. V. Lucas, desires that the wood and wold should be almost wholly his, will regret that there are so many others possessed with the same desire. He does not grudge them free passage over the country, but he regrets the epidemic of little red and white houses that have broken out like a rash in some of the fairest regions, and often in most conspicuous places. "Have I not reason to lament what man has made of Nature?" he might ask. At the same time it is fair to say that some of the invaders have built charming houses and girdled them about with fair gardens and plantations. Things might be worse, and if only the oil profiteer

could be persuaded that the sale of oil could be carried on without the aid of hideous slabs of raw coloured metal, there would be no need to despair of Buckinghamshire.

The little town of Wendover is comfortably near the railway station. This charming collection of old cottages and inns nestles against the Chilterns. In 1832, when the diminutive borough ceased to return two members to the House of Commons, the population was 1,387; now it is 2,366. In most parts of England the little country towns (and much more the villages) are becoming smaller, but in the southern half of this county they are nearly all increasing. It could be wished that this fact might be quoted as a sign of a rural revival, but alas! it merely shows that Londoners have discovered that the Chiltern country is a pleasant residential place. Take the census returns for the rural district of Buckingham and go through the list of villages, and in almost every instance you will find a decrease of population.

To return to the borough of Wendover. Like most rotten boroughs it has a brilliant record of representatives. John Hampden, Sir Richard Steele, Burke and Canning at one time sat for Wendover. The present writer has never felt his bosom thrill in response to the copious moral indignation which has been lavished upon our ancient system of rotten boroughs. It helped to secure the *unum necessarium* in politics, which has been urged by all sages from Plato to Carlyle, that the worthiest should bear rule. *Then*, if a young man with brains and character cherished the honourable ambition of public service, he usually

found a patron who would put a rotten borough at his disposal. In the House, "having to advise the public," he might "speak out" without restraint; as long as the member gave a general support to his party, it was seldom that the patron hampered him. *Now*, if such a young man thought it worth his while to enter the House of Commons (which is unlikely), he would have to beg a large sum of money, and he would be compelled to support schemes for the dissipation of vast sums of public money with a view to bribing the electors. Under the rotten boroughs system the bribery was perpetrated by the patron at no expense to the public; now, whenever the pedestrian, at his lunch, pays a fantastic price for a pint of ale, he may reflect that he is an unwilling accomplice in the bribery of a nation.

But let it not be said that lovers of wise ways are necessarily and blindly lovers of all old ways. It is certain that the system of few electors fostered not only unlimited and demoralising individual bribery, but also a hoggishness of treating and inebriety that would have horrified the barbarous Scythians. Hence Dickens named his East Anglian borough—Eatanswill. In 1831 Lord Shaftesbury (then Ashley) was elected for the county of Dorset. The long drawn out affair was a mere public-house carnival. At the end of it all the philanthropist found that he had to pay the "King's Arms," Dorchester, the sum of £3,238 17*s*. Considerably more than a dozen other purveyors for men and beasts also came forward with their little bills—from the "Phœnix" with £1,319 2*s*. 6*d*., down to the Queen's Arms, which was content

with a paltry £140 0*s.* 1*d.* Nor did this tell the whole tale. Dorchester skimmed the cream, but there were succulent little draughts for Weymouth, Portland, Maiden Newton, Winfrith, Corfe Castle, Milbourne St. Andrew's, and Gillingham. The landlord of the Red Lion, Gillingham, must, like Clive, have been astonished at his own moderation, when he sent in a bill for £2 0*s.* 3*d.* But most of his fellow licensed victuallers thought in hundreds.

But so far we have been immersed in the forbidding topics of population, politics and drink; this choice of subjects is incongruous to Wendover, which is as delightful a little town-village as any of the hundreds which are dotted over England. Anyone who consults the plan in the excellent "Monuments of Buckinghamshire," published by Government, will see that it affords a rich feast for the antiquarian. The "Victoria County History" states that it lies on the Icknield Way, a track of hoary antiquity. According to some maps the Way misses Wendover by several miles, but most archæologists agree that our rude forefathers in their earliest days, finding the forests inconvenient for free locomotion and, doubtless, inhabited by large and voracious beasts, lived on the unencumbered downs, at such places as Stonehenge or Wendover. However, as far as records go, Wendover is quite a bright young place according to archæological standards; it is unnamed by the Domesday Book, and hardly emerges into history till the reign of Henry III. The only achievement which places Wendover in the Temple of Fame is that in an age of unblushing corruption, it astonished the world by its inveterate venality,

which even formed the subject of a scathing sermon at a time when the clergy were not unduly censorious. On Luther's principle of *pecca fortiter* the town deserves praise.

We saunter through the quiet "streets," and from the Shoulder of Mutton Inn onwards notice a procession of old houses, agreeable to the eye. The town has at least one literary association. The present writer, though an admirer of Stevenson, is not one who treasures every scrap that fell from his pen—knowing that, from Shakespeare downwards, good writers often put out very poor stuff—and he was not aware that R.L.S. had ever been to Wendover, till he turned over Mr. Clement Shorter's admirable little book on Buckinghamshire. Though Stevenson seems to have liked Wendover, much of his praise is rather tepid, and he calls it "a straggling, purposeless sort of place." However, he writes in his very best style about the Red Lion—an old posting-house of charming appearance, of mellow brick with attractive gables—and the landlord's little daughter "with two dolls tucked clumsily under her arm." He calls the Red Lion "a pleasant old house with bay windows and three peaked gables." It would be a long task to name all the pleasant old buildings, conspicuous among which is an excellent range, consisting of the King's Head Inn, a draper's shop, and the Post Office.

The Church of St. Mary stands at some distance, and the walk thither is a pleasure by "clear spring and shady grove." It is a handsome decorated building, but has little interest apart from its architecture, the chief exception being a curious

little brass (1537) to a man, his wife, and the usual host of children.

The church is close to the London road, which we gain and proceed southwards. We soon take a lane uphill on the right and proceed towards a hamlet which bears the euphonious name of Scrub Wood. We find it on the top of the ridge and, having passed through Scrub Wood and its pond—the tiny settlement deserves a prettier name—we at once take a footpath to the left, down a very steep hill. When we have reached a wood in the valley our course must be to the left along a broad green bridle road. When the path forks the right branch must be taken. This is one of the best parts of our walk—through a fairy-like birch wood—but in winter we should be up to our knees in mud, and even in summer the path would, in places, be described by the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress" as "damnably muddy." It gets all the drainage from the steep hills round about.

The path at last emerges at the Rising Sun Inn, and we are now at Little Hampden, though without consulting the map one would hardly know that he was passing through a village. It is so small as to be barely perceptible, and the church (dedication unknown) is on a corresponding scale.

The building is interesting; the nave belongs to the twelfth century and there is an ancient and curious wooden porch. There are many mural paintings, including (it is said) no less than four St. Christophers, but they are in such appalling condition that they might be anyone. A former churchwarden has cheerfully dumped among them

his name and date (1762), and he is probably partly responsible for the shocking state of the paintings. In the good old days whitewash was the favourite treatment for this description of ecclesiastical art. Fortunately revengeful Time has obliterated the name of this village vandal, though his date and vocation remain.

This church is possibly the smallest in the Home Counties. Apart from the choir, it will seat just thirty-eight persons.

It was not here but at Great Hampden that the worthy John Hampden had his home. It has always seemed to the present writer that this sturdy country squire has won a dazzling reputation on rather easy terms—that a good second-class man has been written up until he has, like Pollux and wandering Hercules, been translated to a place in the glittering heavens (*arces igneas*). He has no business there. He was merely an honest party. man, brave and determined to do his duty according to his lights. A study of his career will probably make us like him better, for we shall find that he was a man with very human virtues and failings, not a preposterous plaster saint. Almost his first public act was to refuse, on constitutional grounds, to pay taxes while the King was waging war with France; this was much as if a man had refused to pay taxes in the Great War on the ground that Dora was unconstitutional. Again, the refusal to pay Ship Money, on the ground that Buckinghamshire was an inland county, was a piece of very gross particularism, a most unattractive instance of disinclination to do one's bit; in fact, so thin was this plea that the sagacious St. John withdrew

it altogether. To be brief, we shall find that John Hampden, though a fine fellow in his way, was no more a prodigy of intellectual and moral brilliance than the late Duke of Devonshire, whom he greatly resembled. England throws up such men in profusion, and will continue to do so as long as the motto *Noblesse oblige* continues in force. Cromwell's little sermon to John Hampden after the battle of Edgehill ought to be printed in letters of gold in every public school and every elementary school in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

It is one of the little ironies which are innumerable in life, that perhaps the finest act of Hampden is seldom recorded by the partisan histories which were inflicted upon us in our youth. When the House of Commons found it impossible to convict Strafford by the legal process of impeachment they proceeded to put him to death by attainder. Hampden strongly protested against this course. He was not like the Anglo-American nobleman who wrote to *The Times* demanding that the Kaiser should be tried and executed.

Samuel Gardiner, who certainly ought to know, seems to go a good way towards accepting Hampden at his legendary valuation, but is evidently puzzled, and remarks that "the historian is apt to ask himself whether, after all, he deserved the fame which has crowned him." He can only explain it on the ground that "his first and last thought was his duty to his country." This is inadequate. It helped Wellington to immortality, but Wellington had brilliant ability, while that of Hampden was

mediocre. The truth seems to be that Hampden had all the characteristic virtues and limitations of an Englishman ; these alone would gain admiration. But he also possessed a quality, uncommon in politics and not superabundant anywhere—that of perfect straightforwardness and consistency. His followers knew that he would never let them down. That quality has kept alive the memory of Lord Althorp of the 'thirties ; though his acts were mostly blunders, everyone has a word of praise for him, and when, like Hampden, a man has also the assets of fair ability and a picturesque death on the battlefield, he is noble material for the legend-mongers.

Although Carlyle slashed out at everything that came his way in a most disconcerting fashion, he often got in a blow on the side of truth, and here he gets nearer to it than the more staid historians. He does not wish to disparage " such characters as Hampden, Eliot, Pym ; whom I believe to have been right worthy and useful men." But he has to own " I have read diligently what books and documents about them I could come at ; with the honestest wish to admire, to love and worship them like heroes ; but I am sorry to say, if the real truth must be told, with very indifferent success ! . . . very noble men, these . . . . But the heart remains cold before them ; the fancy alone endeavours to get up some worship of them. . . . They are become dreadfully dull men ! " We owe a big debt to Carlyle ; he was one of the first publicists to see the illuminating fact that Cromwell was a very great man and that most of his associates were rather small men.

Following the lane downhill we come to a high road and have a long tramp along it, which is not disagreeable, for the route is pretty and motors infrequent. At last we reach the arterial road from Aylesbury to London and quickly arrive at Great Missenden.

Missenden, though by no means Great, is a pretty town. Long ago some elaborate statistics were published which embraced every district in England and showed that the more public-houses the less drunkenness, and *vice versa*. If these figures were correct the people of Missenden must be temperate to the verge of abstemiousness, for they possess an astonishing number of public-houses, some of which are ancient and picturesque. Among these the Red Lion is not the worst looking, and it offers the wayfarer comfort and civility.

The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul stands at a considerable distance from the town; it is beautifully situated on the side of a hill and is a handsome decorated edifice, not unlike that of Wendover; the points of interest are not numerous, and the fine Norman font is perhaps its most distinguishing feature. Some 800 years ago a certain Sir William de Missenden founded a monastery nearby. This was destroyed to build the more modern mansion—Missenden Abbey—but some of the old structure is incorporated in the modern. From the churchyard a pleasant footpath leads downhill and crosses the little River Misbourne by a footbridge. Still following the path we cross the London road and the railway and, after a longish uphill walk, come to the sign of the Full Moon. Here is Little Kingshill. We

follow the road to Wykeham and presently take a road to the left, and it must be owned that the walk of several miles from here to Penn is not specially attractive; most of the roads are straight and dull, and the country temporarily loses its beauty. At the sign of the Beech Tree we follow a road to the right and, passing through Holmer's Green, at last reach Penn.

This village, which stands at an elevation of about 600 feet, is worth the laborious pilgrimage we have made, for it lies very prettily round a large village green and remains unspoilt. It is, by the way, a great pity that those who stole the common from the goose were not compelled to leave to the goose at least a large village green. Penn is quite an exception; in most villages the children are turned out into the streets to play and to be destroyed by any passing motor-car. In the interest of agriculture it was manifestly necessary to effect enclosures, but the greedy local magnates who engineered them usually grabbed all the land for themselves. Every village ought to have (*as its own immemorial property*) not only a green for its children to play on, but a spacious sward for their elders to saunter upon, and above all good grounds for cricket, football and athletic sports. Had this been done in the days of good King George III we should not now be defeated so frequently by Australasians and Americans in every game and sport, nor should we have to give most of our Blues to young men from California, or the Veldt, or the Bush.

Having passed through Penn on our way to Beaconsfield we soon come to the Church of Holy

Trinity and note that three of the churches visited to-day have stood at a considerable distance from the village-town. It is, like the others, a handsome fourteenth century edifice, and it contains many brasses of which some belong to the Penn family—the earliest is John Pen(n), *d.* 1597. There is no reason for connecting the famous Quaker, William Penn, with this ancient family, now no longer Penns of Penn,* except the belief of William himself. It is stated of Admiral Penn, the great man's father, in an epitaph possibly composed by William, that the admiral was the son of Giles Penn of the Penns of Penn Lodge, in the county of Wiltshire, and those Penns of Penn in the county of Bucks. In any case the connection must have been rather remote, for the family of Giles Penn had long been settled in Gloucestershire. But William Penn may well have asked Ponticus what was the use of pedigrees, and what good the reputation for high lineage would do him, seeing that, so far from being dependent for distinction upon any founder of a family, he himself became the founder of a State almost as large as his own native England.

Some day, if we meet Penn again, we will amuse ourselves with the story of Macaulay's preposterous quarrel with Penn's reputation, but, for the moment, we have quite enough to do to get along to Beaconsfield. The journey is now much less fatiguing, for the road is mostly downhill and is fringed by charming woods, good houses, and well-kept gardens. It might have been even pleasanter,

* In 1731 the Penns parted with their estate to the Curzons who (as Earls of Howe) still possess it.

for when nearing our goal we noticed a signpost on our right marked Footpath to Penn. But as it was our first visit to the village we had no knowledge of by-ways and had to be content with highways.

At last we reach Beaconsfield station. Here the vandal has been hard at work. The town, as we know, is one of the prettiest in England, but round about the station a number of buildings have been erected in crude red brick; they are of surpassing hideousness. Luckily Beaconsfield is a long way from the station, and the road is occupied by many good houses with gardens; there is every hope that Beaconsfield will remain unspoilt. The town has at least one good inn with a most obliging landlord; we have, in another place, page 47, described the various points of interest. The walk is about fifteen miles.

IX

AN ARNOLD WALK

STAINES, LALEHAM AND WALTON-ON-THAMES

STAINES is a cheerful little market-town situated in Middlesex on the left bank of the Thames, which is the boundary between that county and Surrey. It was probably a British village, and was certainly the Roman station of *Ad Pontes*, lying on the road from Silchester to London, which may have crossed the river by a bridge at this point. Even the last (eleventh) edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" perpetuates the absurd statement that the town derives its name from the stane or stone which marked the extreme limit of London's jurisdiction over the Thames. Seeing that this stone, which has been preserved and may be seen in some gardens near the church, is dated 1280 and Staines is mentioned in Domesday Book two hundred years earlier, the popular etymology cannot be commended.

It is, of course, possible that the name is derived from a Roman milestone which may have stood at Staines, but there must have been thousands of milestones in Roman Britain; the derivation is likely enough to be from *stane*, but we have no means of determining the process.

The church has a brick tower by Inigo Jones,

but there is not much to interest us, the body having been built in 1828. In fact, though the town has an attractive appearance, there is little to detain the visitor; by far the best feature is the beautiful view up and down the Thames from the bridge, which itself is a handsome structure by Rennie.

The pleasantest way to reach Laleham is by the towing-path, a walk of rather more than two miles. We take a lane to the left which soon brings us into the village. Its interest is entirely centred in Dr. Arnold and his son.

The elder Arnold lived here from 1819 to 1828, and the younger was born here. It may be remarked that the Arnold family affords a striking practical refutation of the Eugenic theory. The father of Thomas suffered from angina pectoris, and of this complaint Thomas, Matthew and other members of the family died. Under the Eugenic system Thomas's father would not have been allowed to marry, and we should probably never have heard of Rugby, or sweetness and light, or "Robert Elsmere," and many other valuable and interesting things.

Thomas Arnold came direct from Oxford to Laleham, and started an establishment for private tuition. Here the time passed very happily, and he speaks regretfully of "dear old Laleham." Here he married and studied Roman history and meditated on church and state and education. The house has long since been demolished, but the site is marked by two cedar trees, and there is still an open field behind—the Campus—where he took exercise with his pupils. Soon after coming

hither he writes: "Of the country about us, especially on the Surrey side, I have explored much; but not nearly so much as I could wish. It is very beautiful, and some of the scenes at the junction of the heath country with the rich valley of the Thames are very striking. Or if I do not venture so far from home, I have always a resource at hand in the bank of the river up to Staines; which, though it be perfectly flat, has a great charm from its entire loneliness, there being not a house anywhere near it; and the river here has none of that stir of boats and barges about it which makes it in many places as public as the high road." His son also preferred the Surrey side, remarking: "How unlike the journey to Staines, and the great road through the flat, drained Middlesex plain, with its single standing pollarded elms." In later life Matthew lived in Surrey, at Cobham, no great distance from Laleham.

Thomas Arnold is buried at Rugby, but his son rests in the quiet churchyard of Laleham. There are also his three young sons and his wife. Matthew always looked upon Laleham as one of his homes. When his son Basil died at Harrow he wished the boy to be buried here, writing, "Ambleside being not possible, my next wish is Laleham, for which I, more than any of us perhaps, except Jane [his sister], shall always have a home feeling." He himself, dying at Liverpool, was brought to Laleham to be buried. When Dr. Arnold left for Rugby he made over the establishment to John Buckland, who had married his sister. John Buckland was the uncle of Frank, the distinguished naturalist, who was educated here, and monuments

to members of the family may be seen in the church and churchyard. The little church was originally Norman and most of the arches remain, but they have undergone a considerable amount of patching.

Possibly Matthew Arnold has been affected by the modern tendency to despise the preceding generation, and his cult of classical form does not endear him to readers who enjoy verse which neither scans nor construes. A living poet, who is also solicitous of form, Mr. William Watson, has written simple and graceful verses on Laleham Churchyard :—

> "And nigh to where his bones abide,
> The Thames with its unruffled tide
> Seems like his genius typified—
> Its strength, its grace,
> Its lucid gleam, its sober pride,
> Its tranquil pace."

In the church a tablet was set up in 1898 to the memory of Dr. Arnold, "scholar, historian and theologian, and head of a great public school." Lord Lucan also is buried here ; the family seat is close by. He is responsible for the blunder which caused the destruction of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. The English were advancing to the support of the Turks, who were retiring before the Russians and had lost several guns. Lucan received an order to send forward the Light Brigade and recapture the guns. It ought to have been obvious to anyone that the *Turkish* guns were meant, but Lucan interpreted the order to mean the Russian guns, which were stationed in an impregnable position at the end of a valley a mile

and a half away. Lucan was censured by Lord Raglan and very properly relieved of his command.

We take the road to Shepperton, leaving the pretty village of Littleton on our left. Shepperton is a growing riverside resort; near the church there are two old and picturesque inns. There is little to interest anyone in the church; the tower was built by a sometime Rector, Lewis Atterbury, brother of the more famous bishop. In the churchyard, however, there is a little grave that deserves our attention, for here is buried the infant daughter of Thomas Love Peacock. We may read an epitaph of Wordsworthian simplicity which was composed by the sorrowing father:—

> "The little heart so fondly warm,
> The voice so musically sweet."

It is distressing to think that the incumbent objected to the epitaph on the ground that it did not dwell on Christian consolations. This narrowness of vision still lingers after a hundred years; only the other day a parson objected to some lines from Browning being placed on a tombstone.

Peacock and his son-in-law are the chief literary associations of Shepperton. It was in 1823—the year after the death of his friend Shelley—that Peacock took a cottage for his mother at Lower Halliford and soon moved his family there. The house (Elm Bank), which was enlarged by joining another cottage to it, survives; it is close to the Thames upon which Peacock loved to gaze. Here he wrote his later novels, "The Misfortunes of Elphin," "Crotchet Castle," and "Gryll Grange."

Many years later George Meredith married

Peacock's daughter, who was some years older than himself, a widow with a little daughter. The marriage, after a few years, turned out unhappily. Meredith says: "No sun warmed my roof tree; the marriage was a blunder."

Meredith was then in very narrow circumstances, and was probably dependent upon his father-in-law. Eventually Mrs. Meredith left her husband for a more congenial partner. It must be said that Meredith showed a harsh and unforgiving disposition, ignoring his wife's urgent summons when she wished to see him on her deathbed. In the earlier and less unhappy days they all lived together at Elm Bank, and here their son Arthur was born. But it would appear that little Arthur proved troublesome to the elderly grandfather, and Peacock took for them Vine Cottage on the other side of the green—this house also survives. We are told: "It was here, Vine Cottage, in the small front room nearest to the entrance, that Meredith finished 'The Shaving of Shagpat.'" His recreations in this quiet and rural spot took the form of playing cricket with his little step-daughter and other children on the green in front of the cottage, and his customary long walks through Surrey, when he stored up many impressions of nature and scenery which found expression in the novels and poems of years to come." It is possible that the influence of Peacock is shown by the frequent outbursts of verse which occur in "Shagpat" and the "Ordeal."

It could be wished that Peacock had also imparted to Meredith his easy and lucid command of English. Meredith's delight in linguistic contortions has

seriously impaired his fame, and possibly, of the two, Peacock is now more in favour. Peacock has always had a small band of admirers which appears to be increasing. Professor Saintsbury has well-expounded his merits, and now that there is a reaction against cranks and sentimentalism, it may be that he will find still more readers to relish his wit and racy satire of cant and ignorance.

It was through Shepperton that Oliver Twist was taken by Mr. Sikes on mischief bent. "They turned into no house at Shepperton, as the weary boy had expected; but still kept walking on, in mud and darkness, through gloomy lanes and over cold open wastes, until they came within sight of the lights of a town at no great distance." The town was Chertsey, near to which the burglary took place. The actual house where the attempt was made has been identified, so minutely has Dickens been tracked. In the distance beyond Chertsey we can see the slight elevation of St. Ann's Hill, where Fox lived with Mrs. Armitstead, and nearer to us are the grounds of Oatlands, long a royal dwelling place, and at one time the seat of the excellent Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York, son of George III. It is now a *pension*.

We now turn towards Walton and cross the Thames by the long bridge. Some people conjecture that Julius Cæsar crossed the Thames here, and it is certain that pointed stakes were found in the river, which may have been intended to bar his passage. Cæsar remarks, *ripa erat acutis sudibus præfixis munita*, and also *sub aqua defixæ sudes flumine tegebantur*. According to his account the Romans forced the passage without any

difficulty, but reading between the lines, we can see that both Cæsar's British expeditions were really failures.

Walton is a growing place, but it does not make the most of its good situation. The town is commonplace. Lord Rodney was born here, but as we shall see if we visit Harrow, it is difficult to collect any biographical particulars about his early years. There is an unattractive looking house where John Bradshaw, the regicide, once lived. The best feature of the place is the Church of St. Mary. Engraved on a pillar is the clever answer which Queen Elizabeth gave when asked to state her views on the Real Presence :

> " Christ was the Word and spake it ;
> He took the bread and brake it ;
> And what the Word doth make it
> That I believe and take it."

There is another reminiscence of Queen Elizabeth in a brass to one of her keepers of the royal park of Oatlands. It depicts a stag-hunt. There is a large and handsome marble monument to Richard Boyle (*d.* 1740), the second and last Viscount Shannon. He was one of the many distinguished members of the Boyle family in Stuart and early Hanoverian days. As a boy he served at the Battle of the Boyne, and in later life was a Lord Justice of Ireland.

It is a pleasant walk of about three-quarters of a mile to Walton station, and here we may take the train for Waterloo after a ramble of eight miles.

X

A MIDDLESEX WALK

CRANFORD, HARLINGTON AND HARMONDSWORTH

Few counties are more neglected than Middlesex; for Londoners, ignorant of London, are still more ignorant of their county, while people who come up to see London do not find time to visit the adjoining districts. Fuller remarks: "It is in effect but the suburbs at large of London, replenished with the retiring houses of the gentry and citizens thereof, besides many Palaces of Noblemen and three [lately] Royal Mansions." There are many pretty country walks to be found in Middlesex, nor is it, in historical and archæological interest, below the average.

Hounslow Barracks station is reached by the Metropolitan Railway. The Bath Road should be taken, and at the boundary stone between Helston and Cranford an oak-lined lane on the right leads through Cranford. This village, of course, has nothing to do with the imaginary village of that name, immortalised by Mrs. Gaskell, which is represented in real life by Knutsford in Cheshire. The church should be visited on account of its monuments, principally to the Berkeley family, who have been Lords of the Manor since the reign of James I. The finest is that to Sir Roger Aston,

a still earlier possessor of Cranford, but by far the most interesting is that to the delightful topographer, Thomas Fuller, who was appointed Rector here in 1658, only three years before his death. His most popular work is the "Worthies," and the epitaph very happily points out that he in giving fame to the worthies has himself, by so doing, won lasting fame: *Qui dum viros Angliæ illustres opere posthumo immortalitati consecrare meditatus est, ipse immortalitatem est consecutus.* He was succeeded here by John Wilkins, afterwards Bishop of Chester.

Having passed through the village we bear to the left along the edge of the noble grounds of Cranford House, and cross the little Crane by a footbridge. At Cranford House, Grantley Berkeley, an eccentric and turbulent character, spent his youth, and has given an account of a ghost that was supposed to haunt the place. George Meredith in "Beauchamp's Career" has drawn too flattering a picture of him as Everard Romfrey; the man was an insolent bully who brutally assaulted Fraser, the proprietor of the noted magazine, and afterwards fought a duel with Maginn—the Captain Shandon of Thackeray.

From this point, for some distance, the country is smothered by new factories. Station Road, to the left, brings us out on the Dawley Road, which reminds us that we are near the remains of Dawley Court. This for some time belonged to Bolingbroke, and was the centre of much of the intellectual life of England. Pope writes to Swift in 1728: "I now hold the pen for my Lord Bolingbroke, who is reading your letter between two haycocks;

but his attention is somewhat diverted by casting his eyes on the clouds, not in admiration of what you say, but for fear of a shower. . . . As to the return of his health and vigour, were you here, you might inquire of his haymakers." As a matter of fact, my Lord Bolingbroke was more interested in politics than the crops and the weather. Here it was that Voltaire visited him, offered his works for criticism, and dedicated to him the "Tragedy of Brutus." The influence of Bolingbroke upon Voltaire was considerable; the Deist controversy was then in progress, and Voltaire was confirmed in the religious views which afterwards had disturbing effects in France. Upon Pope his influence was even stronger; he it was who inspired Pope's most ambitious poem, his "Essay on Man." In reference to it he writes to Swift: "Does Pope talk to you of the noble work which, at my instigation, he has begun in such a manner that he must be convinced by this time, I judged better of his talents than he did?" Pope, it is true, sometimes got out of his depth in versifying Bolingbroke's philosophy, which he understood imperfectly. Apart from Voltaire and Pope, among the intellectuals who assembled under Bolingbroke's hospitable roof at Dawley were Swift, Arbuthnot, Gay, Windham and Pulteney. Bolingbroke is a statesman and writer who has been more underestimated than any other of equal rank, which is not far from the highest. Both by his writings and his policy he has had one of the largest shares in shaping English political theory, but few of those who have quarried from him have acknowledged their obligations. Burke, who was his pupil both

in thought and style, disparaged him. One of the few who have done him justice is Disraeli who pays him a glowing tribute in the preface to "Sybil," and who indeed revived Bolingbroke by making his principles the base of his own—Young England, Empire and Liberty. He rightly says that Bolingbroke "laid the foundation for the future accession of the Tory party to power, and to that popular and triumphant career which must ever await the policy of an administration inspired by the spirit of our free and ancient institutions." These words describe Disraeli's own procedure.

Dawley Road leads south, and we soon enter the High Street (with one shop) of Harlington. Its church is, with that of Harmondsworth, one of the best in the country. Two of the windows are Saxon, or at least very little later than 1066. But the most admired feature is the Norman doorway with wonderful beak-heads. Lysons quaintly calls them "cats' heads with long tongues curled at the end." Inside there are brasses; one, a priest's brass of 1419, is of exquisite workmanship. On the north wall of the chancel is the monument of Dr. Joseph Trapp, who was Rector here from 1732 till his death in 1747. He was the first Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and though ridiculed in his day, was no mean critic. Although Swift despised him and called him "a pretender to wit," he was kind to him and recommended him to Bolingbroke who appointed him to this living. He preached sermons on the not very obvious "danger of being righteous over much," and thereby got into controversy with a much abler man, the saintly William Law. Somehow he generally appears in a ridicu-

lous light—his verse translation of the "Æneid" was greeted with laughter, and an epigram on it helps to keep his memory alive:

"Keep the commandments, Trapp, and go no further;
For it is written, Thou shalt do no murther."

There is a magnificent yew in the churchyard. A local versifier describes it as:

"So thick, so fine, so full, so wide,
A troop of Guards might under it ride."

At one time the family of Bennet owned the Manor of Harlington, and Henry Bennet, a member of Charles II's Cabal, took his title from the village. Apparently the person who dictated the patent was weak in his aspirates, for the title appeared as Arlington, and the mistake had to stand. Thus Bennet became Lord Arlington. But for this mistake the language might not have been enriched by the word *cabal*. Although historians from Bishop Burnet downwards leave it to be inferred that the word originated in Charles II's reign, it is really older, being derived from a Hebrew word of esoteric theology. It is used by Ben Jonson. However, the acrostic was so apt (and the word had already a sinister meaning) that *cabal* soon took root as denoting a corrupt association or plot. Arlington was a born courtier, always ready to accommodate himself to the royal will and to perform any service required. By that means he climbed into power. Burnet says: "He is no quick man, but has great knowledge of the affairs of Europe, and was ever cautious and fearful;

he quickly found out the king's temper and has been observed to be very dexterous in managing it; he is proud and insolent, yet he has been generally firm to his friends, and so they have stuck very firmly to him; he has been a man of great vanity and vast expense." The canny Pepys also discovered that Arlington was a useful patron, remarking: "By the way, he (Evelyn) tells me, that of all the great men of England there is none that endeavours more to raise those that he takes into favour than my Lord Arlington; and that, on that score, he is much more to be made one's patron than my Lord Chancellor, who never did, nor will do, any thing but for money." In the lower grade of statecraft it is probably willingness to take care of one's friends that carries the politician farthest. Those who have a lively expectation of favours to come will show their gratitude in the practical form of backing their patron. Arlington has left his mark on London topography by giving his name to Arlington Street, off Piccadilly.

We turn to the right about half a mile from the church and, passing through Sipson, come to the picturesque village of Harmondsworth. It would be still more attractive had the enclosing of Hounslow Heath been carried out with more consideration for the villagers, but it was effected in drastic fashion, and Harmondsworth has no village green. Cobbett says: "A much more ugly country than that between Egham and Kensington would with great difficulty be found in England. Flat as a pancake, and, until you come to Hammersmith, the soil is nasty stony dirt upon a bed of

gravel. Hounslow Heath, which is only a little worse than the general run, is a sample of all that is bad in soil and villainous in look. Yet this is now enclosed, and what they call 'cultivated.' Here is a fresh robbery of villages, hamlets and farm and labourers' buildings and abodes!" But the enclosure proved, in reality, beneficial, for rich corn lands and orchards have taken the place of the heath.

Even as late as the first years of the nineteenth century the extent of Hounslow Heath was about five thousand acres. Under the Stuarts it made a considerable figure in military history; Charles I, Fairfax, Charles II, and James II assembled considerable armies there; it may be hoped that "every schoolboy" is familiar with Macaulay's lively description of James II's unsuccessful attempt to overawe the Londoners by establishing a camp on the Heath. But, above all, it is the classic ground of the highwayman. For full three centuries the Heath bore a grim notoriety for cutpurses, and again the lively pen of Macaulay has told us how the wily robbers lay in wait for the courtiers returning from Windsor. These gentry were no respecters of persons, and many noble lords had to hand over their jewels. Both the fiction and the memoirs of the eighteenth century teem with allusions to the sprightly lads who, mounted on blood horses, struck terror into the hearts of those who travelled on the Western roads. Recently we have seen a brilliant revival of Gay's "Beggar's Opera," which is merely the liveliest example of a great mass of that kind of literature. Says Matt of the Mint to Captain

Macheath (observe the "local colour" in the name): "Am I to have the honour of taking the air with you this evening upon the Heath?" and he explains that he is in league with the stage-coachmen, who, with the innkeepers, were in the habit of giving invaluable information to highwaymen.

In "Roderick Random" Smollett describes a journey to Bath: "All of a sudden Strap rode up to the coach door, and told us in a great fright that two men on horseback were crossing the heath (for by this time we had passed Hounslow), and made directly towards us." On this occasion, however, the travellers showed a bold front and succeeded in capturing one of the malefactors and "carried him to the town of Hounslow." In real life, also, the traveller sometimes had the best of it, for we hear that the Earl of Berkeley, by a cunning stratagem, once shot dead a highwayman in this neighbourhood.

The nuisance must have been intolerable. In 1774 Horace Walpole writes: "Our roads are so infested by highwaymen, that it is dangerous stirring out almost by day. Lady Hertford was attacked on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon, etc." Two years later a Secretary of the Treasury was killed in this place of terror. Charles Knight, as a boy, lived near Windsor, and, writing in mid-Victorian days, has strange tales to tell of the old order of things which passed into limbo in his lifetime. He relates how Mr. Mellish, an M.P., and two friends, after a day's hunting round about Langley, had dined in jolly fashion at a tavern. "On their return, when near

the Magpies on Hounslow Heath, they were robbed by three footpads. Not content with their plunder, one of the robbers fired a pistol into the carriage. The ball entered the forehead of Mr. Mellish, and he died at the Magpies." Knight also gives a personal experience: "In 1804, as I was riding home from school, the man who accompanied me proposed to show me something curious. Between the two roads, near a clump of firs, was a gibbet on which two bodies hung in chains. The chains rattled; the iron plates scarcely held the gibbet together; the rags of the highwaymen displayed their horrible skeletons. That was a holiday sight for a schoolboy sixty years ago."

All over England stood the gallows—the supposed cure. No more striking instance in penology can be given of the superiority of prevention over cure than the history of highway robbery. Gallows—the cure—had been in operation for many centuries and had effected nothing. Early in the nineteenth century a very simple system of horse patrols—prevention—was established. Within a few years highway robbery was a thing of the past; it disappeared long before the coming of the railways which have sometimes been erroneously claimed as the cause of its disappearance.

The church of Harmondsworth has a Norman doorway similar to that of its neighbour, but the workmanship is not quite so good. Much of the original Norman church is left, but the north aisle was rebuilt by William of Wykeham. The fine tithe barn should be noted; it is 191 feet long and 38 broad, and is one of the best examples of its kind in existence. We retrace our steps a short

distance and soon rejoin the Bath Road, where a signpost tells us that we are 2¼ miles from Colnbrook. Passing through Longford, we cross several backwaters of the Colne, but before we cross the main stream which forms the boundary between Middlesex and Buckinghamshire we reach Colnbrook station, from which there is a good service to London. The walk is about nine miles.

XI

IN SURREY, NEAR LONDON

ESHER, CHESSINGTON AND EWELL

BEAUTIFUL Surrey is being more and more encroached upon by what Cobbett called the great wen of London, but good rural walks survive within a short distance. From Esher station we turn into the Portsmouth Road to the south of the railway line. Sandown Park racecourse, which lies on the right, owes its name to Sandon, a mediæval hospital which lost all its brethren in the Black Death of 1349. The races were instituted in 1875; their promoters were pioneers in introducing the inclosed meetings which are now almost universal. Sandown Park soon became popular, partly because the executive paid attention to the comfort of racegoers, and the pretty course and pleasant surroundings attracted ladies. Enterprise was also shown in 1886 by the institution of the Eclipse Stakes—the first of those big prizes of £10,000 which came into vogue in the 'eighties and 'nineties. The prize has been somewhat reduced in value; it is rather curious that although the money expended in racing and betting has immensely increased, the great prizes are not as large as they were towards the close of the last century. Although the distance of the Eclipse

Stakes is only a mile and a quarter, the race is remarkable for the number of great horses who have won it. Among them are Bendigo, Surefoot, Orme, Isinglass, St. Frusquin, Ard Patrick, Bayardo and Coronach.

We continue on the main road till we come to The Bear, once a famous coaching house, and note that Esher is a pleasant village standing fairly high on sandy soil; it has much historical interest. If time allowed, a divergence might be made westwards to Esher Place, on the banks of the River Mole, where stands a handsome brick gate-house built by Bishop Waynflete in the fifteenth century. Though the estate has associations with Wolsey, who resided here during his disgrace, this is the only ancient part that survives, for Esher Place was rebuilt not much more than a hundred years ago. It is named in Henry VIII by Shakespeare (or Fletcher), where Norfolk says:

> "Hear the King's pleasure, Cardinal; who commands you
> To render up the great seal presently
> Into our hands; and to confine yourself
> To Asher-House, my lord of Winchester's
> Till you hear further from his highness."

Early in the eighteenth century Esher Place was repaired by Kent for Henry Pelham, the statesman, and the grounds are celebrated by Pope:

> "Pleas'd let me own, in Esher's peaceful grove,
> (Where Kent and Nature vie for Pelham's love)
> The scene, the master, opening to my view,
> I sit and dream I see my Craggs anew!"

Esher has another literary association, for George Meredith came here in 1859. He lived at a house called Faireholme, between The Bear and the Post Office, and here he wrote part of "Evan Harrington." He also occupied Copsham Cottage, some two and a half miles away, where he could indulge to his fill in his taste for Surrey walks. There is a pretty story of his meeting at Esher Miss Janet Duff Gordon—afterwards Mrs. Ross—who sat for his charming heroine, Rose Jocelyn, in "Evan Harrington." The two had lost sight of one another, and met accidentally through Janet meeting Meredith's little boy. She was much flattered at being "put in" one of Meredith's books; it is not often that models in fiction are grateful to the author. There is a further, though slight, literary association. The great Gibbon, as a boy, spent a few weeks at Esher under the tuition of the Rev. Philip Francis, but this easy-going clergyman found the pleasures of London more attractive than his scholastic duties, and so his charge was removed. Francis has a niche in the Temple of Fame as the author of a very creditable verse translation of Horace, and also as the father of the noted Sir Philip Francis. A descendant, lately deceased, proved himself a much more successful educationist, for he raised the ancient foundation of Blundell's, Tiverton, to a very high position among public schools.

At the Bear we turn sharp to the left along the Oxshott Road, and soon come to the lodge gates of Claremont, whose grounds are not open to the public. This fine estate, which once formed part of the Manor of Esher Place, has passed through

many hands. Sir John Vanbrugh built himself a house here, and then it became the property of Lord Clare, afterwards an incapable politician under the name of the Duke of Newcastle. It has been "sung" in very bad verse by Garth, the author of the "Dispensary," in a "poem" called "Claremont." Criticus has often expressed wonder why the world does not allow such effusions to die; the only excuse for their existence appears to be that they help to prevent historians of literature and topographers from being gravelled for lack of matter. We are asked:

> "But say, who shall attempt the adventurous part
> Where nature borrows dress from Vanbrugh's art?"

and we learn in conclusion:

> "The place shall live in song, and Claremont be the name."

Later in the century the great Lord Clive bought it and spent £100,000 on the house and grounds, but could not soothe the melancholy brought about by ill-health and mental strain. Macaulay has described the last days in his well-known style. "The peasantry of Surrey looked with mysterious horror on the stately house which was rising at Claremont, and whispered that the great wicked lord had ordered the walls to be made so thick to keep out the devil, who would one day carry him away bodily." Although Macaulay has done injustice to Clive in certain respects, he has given a not unfair summary of his career and character,

and rightly points out that his melancholy end was due to causes for which he was not responsible. "The malignity with which his enemies had pursued him . . . the knowledge that he was regarded by a large portion of his countrymen as a cruel and perfidious tyrant all concurred to irritate and depress him." Claremont, however, was not the scene of his self-contrived death; this took place at his house in Berkeley Square. It is to the credit of George III that he steadily supported Clive against his enemies. After various vicissitudes Claremont became royal property in 1816, on the occasion of the marriage of Princess Charlotte with Prince Leopold. Later the exiled French King, Louis Philippe, was allowed to live here, and in our own time it was the residence of the Duchess of Albany, where she died a few years ago.

At the lodge gate we take the lane to the left and make our way along the Claygate road. Having passed under the railway arch we take the "Avenue," at the end of which a road to the right soon leads into the village of Claygate. This tolerably rural residential place, cut out of the extensive parish of Thames Ditton, contains nothing to attract attention, and a little way past the modern church a pleasant bridle road leads to Chessington. Its course is uphill, over rough grassland, well planted with birch and larch, and presently we have a finely timbered park on our right, and a house with an extremely lofty tower on the left; this is Ruxley Lodge, the property of Lord Foley. There are excellent views of the hills of Surrey. The path becomes a broad gravel

drive, and, crossing the Kingston-Epsom road, on which lies the tiny village of Chessington, we pass through the white gate which bears the name of Chessington Hall. The house, opposite the church, only dates from 1833, but in the latter half of the eighteenth century the building on this site was occupied by one Samuel Crisp, and described as "situate on a wide and nearly desolate common and encircled by ploughed fields." This Crisp was the guide, philosopher and friend of Fanny Burney. He had become a disappointed recluse, because in 1754 his tragedy of "Virginia" had failed in spite of the efforts of his friend Garrick. Macaulay says: "To the last the unhappy man continued to brood over the injustice of the manager and the pit, and tried to convince himself and others that he had missed the highest literary honours, only because he had omitted some fine passages in compliance with Garrick's judgment." We are told that "No road, not even a sheepwalk, connected his lonely dwelling with the abodes of men."

Fanny often stopped at Chessington Hall, and here, in 1778, received the news that Dr. Johnson had approved of her novel, "Evelina." This greatly delighted her. She says: "But Dr. Johnson's approbation! it almost crazed me with agreeable surprise—it gave me such a flight of spirits, that I danced a jig to Mr. Crisp, without any preparation, music, or explanation—to his no small astonishment and diversion." It would, by the way, be an interesting subject of speculation to ask oneself how many people to-day could be induced to read "Evelina" and "Cecilia," and

how many could honestly say that they had enjoyed them. The probable answer is: Very few indeed. The books belonged to their age, not like "Pride and Prejudice" and "Emma" to all time, and are as dead as Jane Austen's are alive.

Yet Fanny Burney deserves great credit as a pioneer, for she devised the domestic novel; she introduced the fashion of literary decency, and from her time Lydia Languish could read novels without fear of reproof. The path which she showed was followed by the great Jane, who undoubtedly owed much to Miss Burney. Besides learning from her *celebrare domestica facta*, she borrowed from her older contemporary the title of her first and, perhaps, greatest book. Towards the end of "Cecilia" we read: "The whole of this unfortunate business," said Dr. Lyster, "has been the result of 'Pride and Prejudice.'" And, apart from the novels, Miss Burney will always be remembered for her delightful Diary, which gives inimitable portraits of George III and the crowd of notabilities—Johnson, Burke, and many others who liked and admired her.

If we go into the church, which, though ruthlessly modernised, contains a little good Norman work, we shall see the tomb of Crisp (*d.* 1783), with a pompous epitaph by Charles Burney, hinting that if Crisp had enjoyed good health he would have been one of the greatest men of all time.

"Had he through life been blessed by Nature kind
With health robust of body and of mind."

As, however, his only production was an unsuccessful tragedy, the reader remains unconvinced. The bridle-road takes us into the Ewell road, and at Bonesgate we note a road ford—more common in Cambridgeshire than in Surrey. The ale house has the sign of a gate, with the legend : "This gate hangs well—and hinders none—Refresh and pay—and travel on." This sign and exhortation are not uncommon in England.

The comfortable little town of Ewell has much that is attractive, and few writers mention it without dealing with Henry VIII's vast palace of Nonsuch, which is the most signal instance given by Froude's Patriot King of his ruthless and predatory proclivities. Among other devastations he destroyed the parish church and the whole village of Cuddington in his scheme for turning the whole district into a park and hunting ground. This Western Kubla Khan was determined to have a palace such as was possessed by no other "Christian" King. Elizabeth and James I often resided here, but it would appear that the expense of maintenance was too great a burden for the impecunious Stuarts. The end of "Nonsuch" was inglorious. In 1676 Charles II made it over to his mistress, Barbara Villiers, and that extravagant lady, who preferred ready cash to king's houses, sold it to a builder. Out of it were quarried the materials for constructing the "Durdans," Lord Rosebery's Epsom residence. The present "Nonsuch House" is modern; in the grounds some remains of the ancient palace can be traced. Ewell has a slight connection with literature in the person of Bishop Corbet (1582-1635), who was

the son of a gardener in the town. He was a jolly prelate whose conviviality and good humour must have been anathema to the Puritans of his time who were trying to make the world safe for gloominess. He evidently felt that he was a lucky fellow to have made his fortune starting from such humble origins in such a dour age. Addressing his son, he says :

> "I wish thee all thy mother's graces,
> Thy father's fortunes and his places."

One charming song ought to preserve his name from oblivion—the sentiment and regret are worthy of Blake ; it is the world-old theme of the departure of the fairies who danced and sang in the good old days, but now "from ancient melody have ceased" :

> "When Tom came home from labour,
> Or Cis to milking rose,
> Then merrily went their tabour,
> And nimbly went their toes."

Very lately it has been discovered that old Corbet was not such a fool as the Puritans thought him, that Merry England might be a modern reality, and that "when Tom comes home from labour," he and Cis ought to be able to enjoy music and dancing.

The Southern Railway, which we reach before the town, gives a fairly frequent service to London. The walk is about seven miles.

XII

A SURREY WALK

GUILDFORD, PEPERHAROW PARK AND GODALMING

A MISTY morning in late autumn; it is a day for roads and lanes that afford firm going instead of the grassy footpaths for which Surrey is famous. Having alighted at Guildford station we may spare a few minutes for a brief glance at Guildford, which Cobbett calls of all towns "the prettiest . . . the most agreeable and most happy-looking that I ever saw in my life." We accordingly stroll up one side of the High Street and down the other, noting, among many beauties, Abbot's Hospital, a red-brick building in dignified Jacobean style. It is slightly reminiscent of the St. James' Palace which faces up St. James' Street to Piccadilly. Archbishop Abbot, a native of this town, in the reign of James I founded this hospital as an almshouse for old men and women. He is remarkable as being probably the only Archbishop of Canterbury who was an (innocent) homicide. While pursuing deer he, by an unfortunate accident, contrived to kill a keeper with his cross-bow, and a doubt arose whether he, having the taint of blood upon him, might lawfully exercise his holy functions. His misfortune, coupled with his unfashionable tenderness for the Puritans, who

were cordially detested by King James, was an excuse for his temporary suspension. The Town Hall, with an elaborate clock, is an example of a later and less pure style; it dates from 1683.

Another very interesting feature is the Grammar School, which belongs to a period midway between the two aforementioned buildings; it is in the late Gothic style so familiar to us in Oxford Colleges. Apparently it was founded in the reign of Henry VII and escaped being plundered at the Reformation, receiving indeed some meagre grants out of the wrecks of neighbouring religious houses. In the seventeenth century it flourished, but, as was common, fell on evil days in the eighteenth. It revived in the nineteenth, but soon relapsed, and by 1876 was in a miserable condition, without boys or resources. In 1890 it was reorganised, and is now more prosperous than at any previous period in its chequered career, having 300 to 400 boys. But accident has given it a fame which no other school in the kingdom can share; it was the occasion of the first mention of the game of *cricket* in the English language. In 1598 a Coroner named John Derrick deposed that he had known a piece of land for fifty years or more. "When he was a scholar of the Free School of Guildford he and several of his fellows did run and play there at cricket and other plays, and also that the same was used for baiting of bears." The Castle of Guildford was used as a Royal residence down to the time of Henry III, but otherwise is almost unknown to history, the allusions to it in old records mainly dealing with alterations in its structure. If having no history is to be happy

Guildford ought to be a happy town, for it makes little figure in our annals. In pre-Conquest times Harold, the Danish King, perpetrated here a cruel massacre of his rival Alfred and his followers. Guildford was captured by Louis the Dauphin in 1216, and the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth spent a night at Abbot's Hospital on his way to London from Sedgmoor, but otherwise history is almost silent concerning Guildford.

We cross the Wey near the station by a bridge which replaces an old one swept away by the floods of 1900, and, taking the Farnham Road, are soon quit of the town. We have given rather short measure to old Guildford, but the country is our object, and the high road begins to climb the Hog's Back. This remarkable chalk ridge, which extends from Guildford to Farnham, varies in height from 300 to 500 feet, and is seldom more than half a mile broad. Within two miles the road has reached nearly the full height of the ridge, and there is a view on either side, but alas! this is greatly curtailed by a truly English mist. In compensation the prevailing trees are beech, and brighten the way with their glowing copper foliage. On either side are several stretches of park-like land with occasional lodges.

Shortly before the fourth milestone we turn to the left down the Godalming road, but make a brief digression to the right to explore the pretty village of Puttenham. The church, thickly girded about with trees, has a fine Norman arcade and is well worth a visit; it also contains a pathetic modern memorial to an Oxford undergraduate killed by a fall in the Pyrenees. Returning to the

Godalming road we find a comfortable Trust inn, where luncheon can be obtained ; these institutions steer a middle course between the " dry " fanatics and the " wet " profiteers. Almost immediately a lane leading to Shackleford appears on the right, which pursues its course along the low-sloping land south of the Hog's Back, and, after a mile and a half, reaches the quiet village of Shackleford. It is now well to make inquiries for Peperharow, which result in our taking a lane which climbs uphill through pleasant, well-wooded country, and in about ten minutes a white gate appears on the left which takes us into Peperharow Park, the property of Lord Midleton. His family, the Brodricks, purchased the estate as long ago as 1713. It covers no more than 350 acres, but is all quality, being one of those stately pleasure grounds that Tennyson loved to describe.

The chestnuts, oaks and beeches grow to an enormous size, and there are many good cedars, of which the oldest were planted in 1736, and numbers of deer graze the pastures. We walk along the drive and soon come to the tiny village and the church nestling among yews. It has good Norman work, but Pugin was busy here, as elsewhere in the neighbourhood, and the result is rather incongruous. Beyond the church stands the great house. Pursuing our way through the park, now sloping towards the Wey, we look backwards and get a good view of the building ; it was designed by Sir William Chambers and finished by 1775. Horace Walpole had a high opinion of Chambers, who was the architect of Somerset House, but

Somerset House is a masterpiece, and Peperharow House is not. It is only fair to say that Wyatt is responsible for some later additions, and of Wyatt it cannot be said that he adorned whatever he touched.

Within a quarter of a mile the drive forks at a clump of noble beeches, and bearing to the left we pass through a lodge gate into a lane that takes us into the village of Eashing on the high road to Godalming, and here we cross the Wey by an ancient and charming bridge, supported by six narrow arches; parts of it are said to date back to the reign of Henry III. It is fortunate that this bridge is now under the protection of the Society for the Preserving of Places of Historical Interest. There is something about an old bridge which is peculiarly provocative to a Vandal; to destroy a beautiful and ancient building is all very well, but the destruction of a monument of civilisation, such as a noble bridge, must always be greeted with applause. There is, indeed, need of a Pontifex to look after our bridges.

In summer time there are delightful riverside walks, but to-day it is better to take the high road to the left, over a ridge, to Godalming. As we descend to the town the view is marred by a fringe of poplars on our right. We soon reach the great Portsmouth Road, upon which lies the High Street of the pretty little town, once noted for the manufacture of clothing, but now best known for the Charterhouse School which was transferred here in 1872. The Head Master, who effected the change, William Haig Brown, may be looked upon as its second founder. The buildings, with the

conspicuous Founder's Tower, stand on a hill about a mile to the north of the town.

If we wanted to extend our walk we might push on to Guildford, for Cobbett says, "there is hardly such a pretty four miles in all England." Cobbett, as one of the best topographers of the nineteenth century, must needs be constantly in the mouth of pedestrians, especially of those who roam the southern counties. But having done about ten miles in leisurely fashion we resist the temptation; at the point where the diminutive Market Hall blocks the way and looks upon the finely timbered White Hart Inn, we turn to the left down Church Street past the stately shingled spire. This church is a noble building, but its restoration by Sir Gilbert Scott was, in some respects, most unfortunate. The talent of this indefatigable architect is such that we scarcely can praise it or blame it too much. He was a notable leader in the revival of the taste for Gothic architecture, but was unfortunately obsessed by an enthusiasm for the Early English or Pointed style, and this zeal led him to force it upon the churches which he restored, without regard to historical continuity. His motto seems to have been: "Go to; I will make a triple lancet east window," and that accomplished, he considered that he had performed the whole duty of a restorer. His taste for Early English at all costs "made havoc of the church" at Godalming and elsewhere. Here he partially obliterated some most interesting Saxon and Norman work. However, the building remains a good epitome of ecclesiastical architecture, and fortunately present day restorers

are learning, through the mistakes of their predecessors, to perform their task with a lighter hand.

We soon come to the railway station which ends our walk. No one who has rambled along the Hog's Back and through Peperharow Park can complain of a bad day.

XIII

THE KENT AND SURREY BORDER

ADDINGTON AND ITS ARCHBISHOPS; DARWIN AND DOWNE

In this neighbourhood there is much unspoilt country. A motor-bus takes us from the heart of London to Croydon, and we alight at Upper Combe Street, somewhat past the centre of that great congested town, where little that is old remains except the Holy Trinity Hospital. Croydon, which eighty years ago had a population of only 16,000, is now an overgrown place with some 190,000 inhabitants, but it is still a healthy and comparatively pleasant locality. The hospital, usually known as Whitgift's Hospital, having been founded by the Elizabethan Archbishop of that name, is a beautiful oasis among commonplace modern surroundings. We must sorrowfully note that the Vandal, as well as the schoolmaster, is abroad, and that only a few years ago his predatory paw was stretched forth to destroy almost the last remaining glory of Croydon. It is said that a plate glass emporium for the sale of lingerie was weighed in the balance against the architecture of Whitgift, and was pronounced to be more desirable. Great outside pressure was

necessary before a reprieve could be granted. The most melancholy (but very common) feature in this affair was that the local authorities worked heart and soul for the destruction of the hospital. In the days of "Oliver Twist" Mr. Bumble was the sworn foe to Humanity, and in our own time he has only slightly changed his spots and is an implacable enemy of the humanities.

We turn to the left along Upper Combe Street, and are soon in the pleasant Combe Road making for Addington. Crossing two railway lines we find ourselves in the country, passing through park-like lands partly converted into playing fields. The way now lies over Addington Hills, which are covered with glorious birch and pine woods, and on the left appears Addington Park, at one time the country seat of the Archbishops of Canterbury. When the road bears to the left towards the village a view may be obtained of the mansion. The original building served as a hunting lodge for Henry VIII. It is a standing wonder how that monarch found time to do all the mischief which he perpetrated; judging by the number of places where he is said to have hunted one would suppose that his every waking hour was devoted to field sports. The present house—plain and substantial—was built by a certain Alderman Trecothick in 1772. In 1807 Archbishop Manners-Sutton, a stately prelate, having sold the dilapidated palace, of which some remains may be seen in Croydon, bought with the proceeds this estate and the lordship of the Manor. It was sold in 1897 by the rugged Archbishop Temple, who wished to reside at Canterbury:

"Unpractised he to fawn or seek for power
By doctrine fashioned to the varying hour."

Nothing is more characteristic of the high-handed and resolute old hierarch than the manner in which he accomplished this sale. To all objections he opposed the simple remark: "I think the day is past when Archbishops of Canterbury should appear as country gentlemen." His biographer tells us: "So determined was he in his own mind that Addington should no longer be the home of the Archbishops that he never even spent a night there after his accession to the See." The sale has added one to the innumerable Temple anecdotes. "A Bishop once asked him if he thought his successors would wish to live at Canterbury. With the grim smile which accompanied his most terse sayings he replied: 'No, I don't—I want to make 'em.'" It was sold to a South African millionaire, since deceased. Addington House (when last seen) was for sale and had a neglected appearance.

Archbishop Benson, the last who made it his home, had misgivings before he went there that "it was too much in the style of the *grand seigneur*," but he soon fell in love with the place, and his son gives a charming picture of his life there in "a great tract of English woodland with beautiful glades and open spaces."

Here he rode and walked, edited "Cyprian" "under a cedar," and lived a life which he greatly preferred to that at Lambeth; it certainly seems to have fostered literary ability among his children, of whom, alas! but one survives. His son owns

that the house is "very ugly in front," but everything else about Addington is beautiful, including the village and little church, severely restored, but still graceful, triumphant over time, and a far more ruthless enemy, the renovator. It has a number of brasses. Here sleep four Archbishops, Manners-Sutton and Howley with some little pomp in the building, and Sumner and Tait under simple tombs in the country churchyard. Queen Victoria wished that Tait should be buried in Westminster Abbey, but his family preferred that he should have a quieter resting-place. Perhaps the times are now too strenuous for the Trollope kind of episcopate, but the old-fashioned country gentleman side to a prelate's life is not unattractive.

Of all the four, Tait is the only man who would have been celebrated apart from his office, and even he is only a second-class figure—in no disparaging sense. Manners-Sutton, belonging to the family of the Duke of Rutland, was an aristocrat with a fine presence. The best-known fact in his career belongs to the nature of comedy. He was a great favourite of George III, who desired that he should become Archbishop, but Pitt was equally determined to job in his old tutor, Dr. Tomline. As soon as breath had left the body of the former Archbishop, George III, who in such matters was gifted with considerable cunning, sent for Manners-Sutton and solemnly promised him the appointment. Thus he was able to plead a King's word to the discomfited Pitt. According to the moderate standard of his time, the Archbishop was a favourable example of his class; he took some pains to improve (or rather create) elementary education,

and steadily encouraged the excellent Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. Howley (*d.* 1848) was still less distinguished. As was then common, he received preferment because he had been a tutor to Royalty. He must have possessed an optimism invincible by experience, for, while taking the part of George IV against his wife, he committed himself to the proposition that "the King could do no wrong either morally or physically." As he lived through the whole of the Oxford Movement without leaving any mark upon Church history we may accept Greville's verdict that he was "a very ordinary man." Archbishop Sumner (*d.* 1862) was also colourless. It is creditable to him that he obtained advancement not by interest but by academic distinction and his (now forgotten) theological works. He was, however, a weak man and unequal to such crises as the Gorham Judgment, which were a perpetual feature of mid-Victorian Church history. Archbishop Tait (*d.* 1882) was a man of more distinction. In the difficult matter of the Irish Church he showed statesmanlike qualities. He is, perhaps, best known in the matter of Disraeli's bill for "putting down Ritualism," for which he was partly responsible and which brought much odium upon those who tried to put it into action. Lord Selborne says: "The greatest mistake of his life was when, in 1874, he was induced . . . to propose an ill-considered measure of legislation." He adds: "All men respected him, whether they differed from him or not." About Addington only one more circumstance remains to be mentioned—a curious coronation custom. We are told: "The

Manor is held by the singular tenure of making and presenting to the King, at his coronation, a mess of pottage, called *mewpergynon*, subject to the performance of which a carucate of land here was granted to Tezelin, cook to William the Conqueror."

From the church a narrow lane on the right leads uphill through a purely rural district. Then come Addington Lodge and a plateau with good wheat land, for which the parish is still noted, and after a long solitary tramp we pass the boundary stone and enter Kent. A very steep hill is descended, and another equally steep surmounted, when the lane comes out at the sign of the Salt Box on the Westerham road.

We follow the main road towards London past the Biggin aerodrome, and then take a lane on the right leading to Downe. At a farmhouse the lane becomes a footpath, in places not free from mud on winter days, but it saves several miles; when it forks, we must keep to the right, and then follow a lane uphill. Reaching the main road we turn to the right out of our course for a worthy object—to see the house where Charles Darwin lived for forty years. Now used as a school, it is a large, plain, three-storied house, with a wing on either side. "I was pleased," he said, "with the extreme quietness and rusticity of the place." Downe was an extremely out of the way place when he first fixed his abode there in 1842, and it is still a quiet and retired spot. He says: "It is a good, very ugly house with eighteen acres, situated on a chalk flat, 560 feet above sea. There are peeps of far distant country, and the scenery is

moderately pretty; its chief merit is its extreme rurality. I think I was never in a more perfectly quiet country." He added: "My life goes on like clockwork, and I am fixed on the spot where I shall end it." In his later days Darwin was a lion, and people of high renown were glad to visit his retreat. Lord Morley has recorded an interesting meeting at which he himself was present. Gladstone and Morley were staying with Lubbock at High Elms, which we shall see shortly. We are told: "Huxley and Playfair were of the party. Mr. Gladstone had with him the printer's proofs of his second pamphlet, and was in full glow against Turkish terrorism and its abettors. This strong obsession could not be concealed, nor was there any reason why it should be; it made no difference in his ready courtesy and kindness of demeanour, his willingness to enter into other people's topics, his pliant force and alacrity of mind. On the Sunday afternoon Sir John Lubbock, our host, took us all to the hill-top whence in his quiet Kentish village Darwin was shaking the world. The illustrious pair, born in the same year, had never met before. Mr. Gladstone as soon as seated took Darwin's interest in lessons of massacre for granted and launched forth his thunderbolts with unexhausted zest. His great, wise, simple and truth-loving listener, then, I think, busy on digestive powers of the drosera in his greenhouse, was intensely delighted. When we broke up, watching Mr. Gladstone's erect alert figure as he walked away, Darwin, shading his eyes with his hand against the evening rays, said to me in unaffected satisfaction, 'What an honour that such

a great man should come to visit me.' " Darwin died at Downe in 1882.

We turn back to the village of Downe. Here old houses and new make a picturesque medley grouped about the ancient flint church, round which great yews grow. At the south-east end of the churchyard is a granite tomb, beneath which lie buried the elder brother and the wife of the great Darwin, recording the fact that he himself sleeps in Westminster Abbey. From this point curiosity might lead the wayfarer to the still more secluded village of Cudham, some two miles away. Here, in the 'seventies, a lonely farm was the scene of a cruel crime, when the Stauntons brought about the death of an unfortunate, feeble-minded woman—the wife of one of the culprits. The case was called the Penge Mystery, because it was to Penge that the victim was finally moved to die. The trial was remarkable for the relentless summing-up of Judge Hawkins, who had been recently raised to the Bench, which caused the jury to convict all four of the accused. All, however, escaped the extreme penalty.

However, it will be more convenient to take a lane behind the church for Farnborough. The beauty of this lane is due to the fine estate (High Elms) of Lord Avebury ; the late peer was equally distinguished for banking, bank holidays, natural history and archæology. It was in 1872 that, at his instance, the admirable institution of bank holidays was started, and he deserves to be known as Saint Lubbock by the toilers who benefit thereby. He also did much to shorten the hours of shop assistants, and should be remembered with

gratitude by pedestrians for his exertions in preserving footpaths and open spaces. After about a mile and a half the house is passed—a rectangular, ugly, comfortable-looking building. Soon we take a footpath through the pinewood, and reach Farnborough through the churchyard. If a prize were offered for a good example of ecclesiastical architecture, Farnborough Church would not be a dangerous competitor. From the growing village of Farnborough a motor 'bus carries the pedestrian back to London, after a walk of some ten miles, which, for interesting associations and rusticity, may be strongly recommended.

XIV

DICKENS LAND

The topography of Dickens embraces North Yorkshire, parts of the Midlands, East Anglia, Hertfordshire, Bath, Portsmouth, and, in particular, London and its neighbourhood. But a section of Kent may be most properly called Dickens Land. It is that part of the county which lies along the mail route to Dover.

Parts of this are of minor importance. Carker was killed on the railway at Ashford—"a retired spot on the borders of a little wood." Ashford has grown considerably since the days of Dombey. Mr. Creakle kept a school at Blackheath—"Salem House was a square brick building with wings of a bare and unfurnished appearance." Shooter's Hill figures in a powerful scene in "A Tale of Two Cities," where we see "the guard of the Dover mail . . . that Friday night in November, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, lumbering up Shooter's Hill, as he stood on his own particular perch behind the mail, beating his feet, and keeping an eye and a hand on the armschest before him, where a loaded blunderbuss lay at the top of six or eight loaded horse pistols, deposited on a substratum of cutlass." Dover and Canter-

bury are of considerable importance in the life of David Copperfield.

But the heart of the Dickens Country is the five-mile radius of Rochester. In it he passed the most impressionable years of early youth; there he passed the last twelve years of his life, and it was there that his life ended. "Pickwick Papers," his first important book, and "Edwin Drood," his last and uncompleted work, deal with Rochester. As might be expected, the memorials of him are very numerous. Except Shakespeare, no Englishman of letters has stamped himself so distinctly upon a place, and, in the case of the novelist, it is not merely one place to which we resort for his associations; quite a dozen important spots in various parts of England may be visited, and the footsteps of his characters traced.

Dickens came to Chatham in 1816 or 1817, a boy of about five, and the family resided at 11, Ordnance Terrace, near Chatham Railway Station. During the first few years Mr. Dickens, Senior (or Micawber), was either comparatively prosperous or else generous, for he subscribed to a history of Rochester, and gave money to relieve the sufferers from a fire. But the famous difficulties soon obtruded themselves, and in 1821 he migrated to an inferior house, 18, St. Mary's Place, "The Brook." In 1823 he left Chatham for London.

In the "Uncommercial Traveller" Dickens calls Chatham Dullborough. Chatham, which is one of the ugliest, dirtiest and most meanly built towns in England, has been described in "Pickwick," and time has not made much alteration. Mr.

Pickwick's notes allege that, "The principal production of these towns appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers and dockyard men. . . . A superficial traveller might object to the dirt, which is their leading characteristic, but to those who view it as an indication of traffic and commercial prosperity it is truly gratifying."

The Great Lines, a high and grassy plateau between Chatham and Gillingham, are exactly as they were when the great sham fight took place, to the discomfort of Mr. Pickwick and his friends. Fort Pitt, where the duel nearly took place, was a military hospital during the Great War. The Mitre and Clarence Hotels figure in one of the short stories.

But Rochester was more warmly installed in the heart of Dickens than Chatham. "If anyone knows to a nicety where Rochester ends and Chatham begins, it is more than I do." In "Pickwick Papers" he speaks of it under its own name; in "Great Expectations" it is the Market Town, in "Edwin Drood" Cloisterham, and in slighter works Our Town, or Mudfog. The Bull is still the chief house in the city; its staircase is correctly delineated in one of Seymour's illustrations. The grand old stone bridge, close by, on which Mr. Pickwick stood, has been replaced by a modern one, and the South-Eastern (now the Southern) Railway contrived to destroy a great part of the beauty of the Medway by an ugly erection, just as it has doubly defaced the Thames.

The view from the bridge, beheld by Mr. Pickwick, "might well have charmed a far less

reflective mind than that to which it was presented." There was the "ruined wall," and "behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its own might and strength, as when seven hundred years ago it rang with the clash of arms or resounded with the noise of feasting and revelry. On either side, the banks of the Medway, covered with corn-fields and pastures, with here and there a windmill or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape, rendered more beautiful by the changing shadows which pass swiftly across it, as the thin and half-formed clouds skimmed away in the light of the morning sun."

The Castle dates from the time of Henry I, but it does not make much figure in history. The Cathedral, begun by Bishop Gundulf, is still a noble building, but in the last century it suffered much from the restorers, especially Pearson. The late Rev. Charles Cox inveighed bitterly against the destruction of fine fifteenth century architecture and the substitution of "Pearsonesque bogus Norman work." In "Edwin Drood" the Cathedral of "Cloisterham" is the chief scene in which the half-told mystery is enacted. Among the many monuments we notice that of Richard Watts, of whom we shall hear presently, and a brass tablet in memory of Charles Dickens.

The quaint High Street winds along towards Chatham, studded with Dickens buildings. The Watts Charity, founded in 1579 for the benefit of poor travellers who were not "Rogues or

Proctors," was the subject of a charming paper. It is an unspoiled, gabled, Elizabethan building. We know from the "Gentleman's Magazine" of 1753 that the original inscription was somewhat different from that quoted by Dickens, which still stands in the High Street. The more modern one is slightly abbreviated, but both have the essential words "Rogues" and "Proctors." The shorter one probably dates from 1771, when the house was in part rebuilt. With the exception of a new dining-room, Watts' Hostel is almost exactly as it was in Elizabethan times. According to the "Gentleman's Magazine," the inscription had only recently been set up, but the writer must refer to a renewal, as there would have been no sense in a warning against Proctors in the middle of the eighteenth century.

Richard Watts (1529-1579) was an excellent benefactor to Rochester; originally the land which he left to support the charity was of the annual value of twenty marks only, but by the time it attracted the notice of Dickens the income had swelled to £7,000 a year. It now supports another considerable almshouse as well as some capital public baths and other useful institutions.

Not far away is Eastgate House Museum, which in "Edwin Drood" figures as the Nun's House; "a venerable brick edifice, whose present appellation is doubtless derived from the legend of its conventual uses. On the trim gate enclosing its old courtyard is a resplendent brass plate flashing forth the legend: 'Seminary for Young Ladies. Miss Twinkleton.' The house front is so worn and old, and the brass plate is so shining and

staring, the general result has reminded imaginative strangers of a battered old beau with a large modern eye-glass stuck in his blind eye." The house was once a girl's school, but it has been used as a museum for many years; the building was in existence at least as early as 1591.

Almost opposite is an old black and white timbered house, which does double duty as "Mr. Pumblechook's premises in the High Street of the market-town . . . the premises of a corn chandler and seedsman," and of Mr. Sapsea, the auctioneer. "They are of about the period of the Nuns' House, irregularly modernised here and there, as steadily deteriorating generations found, more and more, that they preferred air and light to Fever and the Plague." It is now a tea-shop.

At a little distance from the High Street there are other interesting buildings, notably Restoration House, which figures as Satis House, the abode of Miss Havisham, "which was of old brick, and dismal, and had a great many iron bars to it. Some of the windows had been walled up; of those that remained, all the lower were rustily barred." The haughty Estella, referring to it as the Manor House, remarks: "Its other name was Satis; which is Greek, or Latin, or Hebrew, or all three—or all one to me—for enough. . . . It meant, when it was given, that whoever had this house, could want nothing else. They must have been easily satisfied in those days, I should think." The house owes its real name to the fact that Charles II passed a night there on his return from exile in 1660. It stands in the pleasant Vines Recreation Ground.

There is also another old building not far away —the real Satis House, which once belonged to Richard Watts. He entertained Queen Elizabeth, and when she left he apologised for the humble nature of the entertainment, and she graciously replied: "Satis," and so he re-named the house.

Rochester is full of associations with Dickens. The writer once met in the Close an old man who claimed to be Durdles. He possessed a walking-stick given him by the novelist, and, like most people who ever made his acquaintance, spoke of him with enthusiasm. He pointed out a spot near the Cathedral which Dickens had chosen as his burial place, and it was a grievance with him that the burial took place in London after all.

From Rochester to Cobham is a delightful walk of some five miles. A great part of the way lies through the noble seven-hundred acre park, in which stands Cobham House, a red brick Elizabethan structure, the property of the Earl of Darnley. The walk through the park, the pleasant glades and deer have been described in "Pickwick." The Leathern Bottle, a small and old inn, has the portly figure of Mr. Tupman painted on the sign, and we may see the "long, low-roofed room furnished with a large number of high-backed leather-cushioned chairs of fantastic shapes, and embellished with a great variety of old portraits and roughly coloured prints of some antiquity," which is still used for the refreshment of travellers. Here it was that the mournful Tupman dissipated his sorrows with breakfast. "At the upper end of the room was a table, with a white cloth upon it, well covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale and

et ceteras; and at the table sat Mr. Tupman, looking as unlike a man who had taken his leave of the world as possible."

Cobham Church contains the most magnificent set of brasses in the whole world. From Cobham it is no long walk to Gad's Hill Place, and here we are on a path which was constantly trod by Dickens. We are told: "His last visit to Cobham was on the 7th June, 1870, the day before he was seized with his fatal illness. He drove to Cobham Wood with Miss Hogarth, there dismissed the carriage and walked round the park and back to Gad's Hill."

But our special excursion to-day is to Cooling, and that may be best made from Strood station. We pass under the railway and walk uphill through the little town. Turning to the right we follow the tram lines and see, a few hundred yards from our road, the finely situated Frindsbury Church; it contains some Norman work. We go downhill towards the marshes. At the hamlet of Wainscot we notice Dickens Terrace, dated 1901. Our road leads uphill through Chattenden, which is divided into two parts and is devoted to military purposes. In the Great War there was an important cordite depôt here. When we reach the crest of a gently sloping hill the road takes a sharp turn, and we see in the flat land below Cooling Castle and beyond the great blue-grey strip of the Thames. A footpath leads straight to the village, in which the most conspicuous object is the stately Castle, which makes some figure in history, but, as Dickens never mentions it, we need not pay much attention to the building. At one time it was a property of

Sir John Oldcastle: "My old lad of the Castle," the immortal Falstaff.

To all Dickens lovers Cooling is sacred ground, for it is the village of Dickens's almost masterpiece, "Great Expectations." "Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. . . . The bleak place, overgrown with nettles, was the churchyard . . . . the dark, flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes." Close to the tower of the church are the tombstones and "little stone lozenges" which Dickens ascribes to the Pirrip family. There are, in fact, *ten* little lozenges, and the name is Comport, which possibly gave him the hint for the peculiar name of Compeyson.

The broad Thames is not much more than a mile away to the north, and all day long one can watch from the churchyard the stately ships pass up and down, "sometimes, when the tide was low, the sails, looking as if they belonged to sunken ships that were sailing on at the bottom of the water." It may be added that the Comport family was considerably higher in the social scale than that of Pirrip, for there are more or less costly monuments to members of that family in the church and churchyard; one is described as of "Gatton's Hall, Cliffe." The tavern, the Three Jolly Bargemen, is represented by the Horseshoe and Castle, which has recently been rebuilt. Here moderate refreshment may be obtained.

In this connection a commentator remarks

with surprising futility: "There is, unfortunately, no such inn as the Three Jolly Bargemen at Cooling or elsewhere in the neighbourhood. We must therefore regard it simply as a fancy title." So we might comment: "There is, unfortunately, no such hotel as the Grand Babylon Hotel either in London or the suburbs. We must, therefore, regard it simply as a fancy title." Indeed, some of the critics have shown considerable muddle-headedness over Cooling. It appears that there is not and never has been a forge in the village, and this circumstance has set them hunting for other villages in the neighbourhood which *have* got a forge. Surely the creator of Pickwick and Sam Weller and Mr. Pecksniff may be allowed enough imagination to supply a forge. Tennyson was greatly annoyed by admirers who, apparently believing him unable to imagine a hall, were always looking for Locksley Hall on the Lincolnshire coast. He said: "I never had a cousin Amy, Locksley Hall is an entirely imaginative edifice."

Seeing that Dickens himself identified Cooling with the village of his story, the quest for others is much ado about nothing. His agent Dolly, says: "Many a misty walk we took to the marshes at Cooling that we might get a realistic notion of the dreariness and loneliness of the scenes in 'Great Expectations, made famous' by Pip and the convict. On such occasions as these we not unfrequently returned wetted to the skin by a drenching rain." Forster also speaks of "Another drearier churchyard, itself forming part of the marshes beyond the Medway," and relates how Dickens often took friends to look at the tombstones of

the children of "one family which he made part of his story in 'Great Expectations.'" We may fancy Dickens walking through the mist over the flat fields. "About the whole of this Cooling churchyard, indeed, and the neighbouring castle, there was a weird strangeness that made it one of his attractive walks in the late year or winter, when from Higham he could get to it across country over the stubble fields."

The present writer has several times visited the churchyard, but it so happens that he has always seen it in sunshine, and thus it has not been easy to get the weird atmosphere of the masterly early chapters of "Great Expectations." Dickens took particular plains with the topography of Cooling and its marshes, and the whole treatment is almost unsurpassed even by himself. His friend, Wilkie Collins, adopted the same method of heightening the effect of the weird events in his narrative by giving them an eerie background.

It is curious to think that "Great Expectations" owes its present form to a mere accident. In 1860 Dickens was planning another long novel in twenty monthly parts. But his magazine, "All the Year Round," was languishing under the burden of an unsuccessful serial written by Lever, who was getting old and forgetting his cunning. "A Day's Ride, a Life's Romance" was causing the circulation of the magazine to fall off. Accordingly he determined to save the situation by promptly beginning a story himself, but that necessitated a smaller scale, as there was no time to prepare a work the size of "Bleak House." On September 25th he decided to start the story on

December 1st, and set to work at once thus tying himself "down to the grindstone pretty tightly." Possibly the need for compression was beneficial. "Great Expectations" is really the only one of his novels which has a good plot worked out without "wooden" characters, and further it has no padding as in "Dombey and Son" and "Little Dorrit."

The topography of the book is, even for Dickens, exceptionally brilliant, and he spared no pains. Wishing to be sure of the details in the thrilling voyage made by Magwitch and his friends, he chartered a steamboat and went with a party of friends from Blackwall to Southend and, as Forster says, "his sleepless observation was at work all the time, and nothing had escaped his keen vision on either side of the river."

As originally written the story kept Pip and Estalla apart to the end, but Bulwer Lytton persuaded him to alter the brief conclusion, and "Great Expectations" ends with wedding bells. The change has been variously judged, but many readers will be grateful to Lytton for having brought about a happy ending.

We take the road eastwards and after a longish walk pass through the outskirts of Cliffe and, turning to the left, cross the single railway line. In front we see the spire of Higham Church, perched aloft, and to our right the Thames is still visible. We go uphill through the village of Higham and cross the main line near Higham station.

After about another mile we come out into the main road and are at Gad's Hill. Here stands the renowned Gad's Hill Place. It was here that

Dickens was struck down by his fatal seizure almost immediately after desisting from his work on "Edwin Drood." The last surviving eye witness of the scene, Miss Georgiana Hogarth, died a few years ago.

The house, which has changed hands many times since 1870, is an undistinguished-looking building of fair size, and its chief disadvantage is that it stands close to the road, and both it and the grounds of several acres, which rise rather steeply behind, are completely overlooked and get a liberal share of dust from the Dover Road. Close by is the Sir John Falstaff Hotel, from which Dickens purchased his beer.

Gad's Hill Place was built in 1780 by one Stevens, originally an ostler, who prospered in life and became Mayor of Rochester. Early in the nineteenth century it was bought by the Rev. James Lynn, and his daughter, Mrs. Lynn Linton, passed her young days here; she and her sisters used to enjoy watching the coaches pass by on the high road. Mr. Lynn sold the property to Dickens in 1856 for £1,700.

The romantic story of Dickens's aspirations after Gad's Hill Place is well-known. As a "very queer small boy" his Micawberesque father, expecting something to turn up, told him that if he were to work hard and become a successful man he might possess that very house. There is an exact parallel in the case of Warren Hastings and Daylesford.

Dickens took the greatest delight in his property, and was constantly adding to it and altering it. He loved to assemble his friends and to take them

long country walks, sometimes to the discomfiture of feebler pedestrians. Fitzgerald notes in his diary: "Let me think of the dinner at 'Gad's' (as he loved to call it) after the cricket match, sitting next Mamie." Dickens took great interest in the cricket matches in an adjoining field, and it may be supposed that, in course of time, he learned the rules of the game. When he was writing "Pickwick" it is certain that he thought the score of either side moved along simultaneously as in billiards, and the howlers he perpetrated in that famous match are numerous.

Dickens lived on excellent terms with his neighbours, and there was always plenty of beer for them from the Sir John Falstaff on occasions of cricket, athletic sports and of the like. But he never quite hit it off with the tramps—though a tramper himself, he was not a Borrovian. He devotes a special paper to the subject. Of the typical tramp he says: "It is a favourite fiction with him . . . (as if he were the most industrious character on earth) that *you* never work; and as he goes past your garden and sees you looking at your flowers you will overhear him growl with a strong sense of contrast, 'You are a lucky devil, you are!'"

Karl Marx had just begun his career as an author. However, as we may guess from his writings, Dickens had compassion on the poor, daggle-tailed, wearing woman, who trailed behind him often encumbered by children, and we are told that he had a special seat in his garden from which he could descry such wayfarers, and would often descend to the road and give them a shilling.

Dickens delighted in house parties, and is acknowledged by all to have been an admirable host. Everyone who won his affection was asked to Gad's Hill Place, many of them men whose names are still well known. Longfellow, Bayard Taylor, Fechter, the actor, and many other prominent Americans were to be seen there from time to time. Young people were particularly welcome. We have seen that Percy Fitzgerald (one of the latest surviving friends of Dickens, who died only the other day) was in request, and also Marcus Stone, who, though youthful, was chosen to illustrate "Our Mutual Friend." Hans Andersen, at one time an enthusiastic admirer of the novelist, was a visitor, but Dickens seems to have eventually become bored with the acquaintanceship, partly owing to Andersen's neurotic temperament and partly owing to his inconvenient habit of sending hordes of Danish friends with letters of introduction to Dickens. At all events, after spending five weeks in the Kentish house in 1857, Andersen received no further invitation, and before long the correspondence ceased.

Undoubtedly Gad's Hill Place was a scene of merry hospitality, worthy to be classed with the entertainments which Dickens loved to describe in his novels, and it is sad to think that they were abruptly cut short. The thin spun life need not have been slit had Dickens taken ordinary care of himself. But the restlessness, which his friends observed and which made it impossible for his wife to live with him, drove him fiercely forward, through American readings and English readings, to banquets, interviews, speeches and railway

journeys, as if it were some Ate hurrying him to destruction. He died worn out at the age of only fifty-eight.

He had at last got rid of the readings, and, when too late, had come to pass the summer at Gad's Hill Place and rest, i.e. write a large novel in monthly parts. The work and his life were proceeding smoothly and happily. But on June 9th he died so suddenly that several members of his family arrived too late to see the end. He was buried (very wrongly) in Westminster Abbey in direct opposition to his vigorously expressed wishes and the whole practice and principle of his life. Westminster is the last place with which he would have wished to have been associated.

With the exception of Mr. Thomas Hardy, no writer, not even Scott, has identified localities with fiction as closely as Dickens, so closely, indeed, that the personages are always thought of as actual beings, and the places are more intimately associated in our minds as the scenery of the Dickens drama than they are in their intrinsic character. The corner of Kent, which we have perambulated to-day, is beyond all others the peculiar property of Dickens. The walk is about nine miles.

XV

AN ESSEX WALK

SHENFIELD TO CHELMSFORD AND INGATESTONE

FROM Shenfield station we take the road to Southend on the south side of the main line, and pass the Poplar Schools, a good gabled building of red brick. We leave the main road, striking north, and after about a mile and a half we cross the branch railway line and soon afterwards pass over the little Wid, which we shall meet again, by a road ford. We bear to the right, taking the lane, as pointed out by the signpost, to Mountnessing Church, which we reach after three miles walking by lanes through lonely country. This church of St. Giles, which stands on rising ground far from the village, has a timber tower and broach spire; it is in many ways remarkable. The tower itself is a wonderful piece of work, being very massive, and the huge timbers which carry it are a prominent feature of the west end of the building. There is also an ancient timber chest. The nave belongs to the middle of the thirteenth century, but there are many later additions, and the wooden tower, the high pitched tile roof, and the brick additions give the whole a homely but attractive appearance.

We have a long walk before us to Stock, "a sorry

step," as one of the inhabitants phrased it, and the way lies through the pleasant, rippling country of Essex; the lanes are in places grass grown, and there are few people to be seen. The Wid clings to our steps and we have another road ford. At Buttsbury we branch to the right. Here there is a wayside church, which is said to have some points of interest, but we are anxious to get on to an inn, and leave it unvisited.

At last we turn into the main road between Billericay and Chelmsford, and are soon gratified by seeing the beginnings of the village. Stock is an extremely charming village; there are many good gardens with luxuriant trees that border the high road, and all is clean and tidy; and the houses, great and small, are well built.

It may be of interest to mention that the trustees of Lord Petre, a minor, have the presentations of three livings in the neighbourhood, but they are not allowed to present because the family is Roman Catholic—one of the many anomalies of our system of ecclesiastical patronage. It is further an odd circumstance that the Petre who founded the fortunes of the family and obtained large grants of land in Essex, took his stand on ultra-Protestantism, was foremost in harrying the religious houses, whose death, in fact, was his life. Some amends were eventually made by the family, for Sir William Petre's grand-daughter, Dorothy Wadham, founded Wadham College at Oxford. However, his son, the first Baron Petre, became a Roman Catholic, and, from that day to this, the family has distinguished itself by zeal for the ancient faith. The Lord Petre of Charles II's days,

a most loyal man, was wickedly imprisoned during the fury of the Popish Plot, and he died in the Tower. A later Lord Petre is a leading figure in Pope's "Rape of the Lock," which relates:

> "What strange motive . . . could impel
> A well-bred lord to assault a gentle belle."

Lord Petre had stolen a lock of hair from Miss Belle Fermor, and a quarrel arose in the families, which Pope's poem was designed to appease. To set Pope to stop a quarrel was like requesting Satan to rebuke sin, and the poem was a failure in that respect. Lord Petre soon afterwards married "a great heiress," and the affronted belle consoled herself with a Mr. Perkins.

The Church of All Saints has a wooden tower and spire like that of Mountnessing. There are several brasses and monuments, but none is of any great interest. At Stock William Unwin was for some time Rector; he was the son of Cowper's beloved Mrs. Unwin, and to him the poet addressed a large number of his best letters. The period of the correspondence was the happiest time of Cowper's life—the halcyon days at Olney—when his mind was clear and, for the most part, unobsessed by the cruel Calvinism which eventually destroyed him.

Cowper gossips pleasantly to Unwin about his rural pursuits in the engaging manner which has endeared him to innumerable readers. He says: "I am obliged to you for what you said upon the subject of book-buying, and am very fond of availing myself of another man's pocket, when I can do it creditably to myself and without injury

to him. Amusements are necessary in a retirement like mine, especially in such a state of mind as I labour under. The necessity of amusement makes me sometimes write verses; it made me a carpenter, a bird-cage maker, a gardener; and has lately taught me to draw, and to draw too with such surprising proficiency in the art, considering my total ignorance of it two months ago, that when I show your mother my productions she is all admiration and applause." To him also Cowper addressed a most lively and discerning criticism of Dr. Johnson's harsh treatment of Milton. Unwin died in 1786 of a "putrid fever," that *Memento sanare*, which slew millions until Disraeli came forward with his *Sanitas sanitatum*, for which he was reproved by the Manchester School, as derogating from the dignity of politics. The putrid fever spared no one; as Bright might have said: "He takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and lowly." It carried off the Prince Consort and nearly killed the Prince of Wales; in fact, Windsor Castle was one of the most insanitary dwellings in the kingdom.

Of Unwin Cowper wrote: "He has gone to it (the grave), though young, as fit for it as age itself could have made him; regretted, indeed, and always to be regretted by those who knew him, for he had everything that makes a man valuable both in his principles and in his manners, but leaving still this consolation to his surviving friends, that he was desirable in this world chiefly because he was so well prepared for a better."

It is to William Unwin that Cowper addresses some verses in John Gilpin vein. "The Yearly Distress depicting the disagreeable season of tithes at Stock."

"The priest he merry is and blithe
Three-quarters of a year
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe
When tithing time draws near."

The farmer grudged the payment:

"For then the farmers come, jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good."

Even a good dinner does not improve matters:

"The dinner comes, and down they sit
Were e'er such hungry folk?
There's little talking and no wit;
It is no time to joke.

"One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
One spits upon the floor,
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

"The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpish still as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier."

But the end is still less agreeable :

> "Quoth one, 'A rarer man than you
> In pulpit none shall hear :
> But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
> You sell it plaguy dear.'
>
> "Oh, why are farmers made so coarse,
> Or clergy made so fine ?
> A kick that scarce would move a horse,
> May kill a sound divine."

Had Cowper been left alone by Newton and the other devotees of Moloch he would have lived and died a happy man.

From Stock it is a walk of some two miles along the broad high road to Galleywood Common. Here there is an excellent steeplechase course, and, rather curiously, the church, which is quite modern, stands almost on the race-course. The gorse-clad common stands high, and great stretches of country can be seen in all directions.

We take the less direct road towards Chelmsford, to Great Baddow, which is practically a suburb of Chelmsford. The church is worth a brief visit, and there is a good Jacobean brass to Jane Paschall.

We soon reach Chelmsford, which, though not the largest town in Essex, is the county's ancient capital ; it is well off for rivers, being situated on the confluence of the Chelmer, Lid and Cam. Lying on an important Roman road, the place is sometimes identified with Cæsaromagus, but the station was probably not very large ; the Roman remains which have been discovered from time to time are not extensive.

It was, however, a place of some consequence before the Norman Conquest, and the Bishops of London did much to develop it. But it is a town with almost no history, and there is not very much for the sightseer. The situation is extremely awkward for a country town, as dwellers in North Essex can only approach it by London, if they go by rail. From Saffron Walden the distance is about twenty-five miles by road, seventy-five by rail.

Within the last twenty years Chelmsford has received an additional distinction in being made the seat of a Bishop—the diocese being conterminous with the county and having a population of about a million. Some ecclesiastics, whether from respect of ancient traditions or from desire to have the Cathedral near to themselves, voted for Waltham Abbey or Thaxted, but Chelmsford was a strong favourite with Colchester next in demand. Disjointed as Essex is, the arrangement of identifying the whole county with the whole diocese is certainly a convenient one, and may help to give more unity to the shire.

The industries are miscellaneous and are rather numerous and important for so small a town; the population has been slowly increasing. In 1841 there were 6,789 inhabitants, now there are 20,761. The chief industries are the manufacture of agricultural machinery, electrical engineering, corn-milling, brewing and rope-making.

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin is now a Cathedral. It was built in the reign of Henry VI. There are a few monuments of merit, but the persons they commemorate are of little importance.

Compared with many Essex towns, Chelmsford is singularly poor in old houses. There is, however, an ancient inn, the Saracen's Head, which has an interesting literary association, for Anthony Trollope made it his headquarters when he hunted with the Essex and Essex Union. He is very fond of describing the hotel life of hunting men, and so the Saracen's Head probably served him as a frequent model.

Having soon exhausted the objects of interest in the town we take the Roman Road towards Ingatestone. After a mile and a half we come to the village of Widford—the church is modern. It is unfortunate that we have not time to turn aside to Writtle, for an amusing man lived there named John Bastwick. But our walk is already very long. We pass Hylands, a fine park of 600 acres. When nearly three miles from Chelmsford we notice a footpath on the left, opposite a small inn. We take this and walk across the fields to the beautiful church of Margaretting, which, like many others in the neighbourhood, has a good shingled spire. There are many Roman tiles built into the walls. The fifteenth century glass in the east window is perhaps the best in Essex; the subject is a Tree of Jesse. There is a beautiful font of the same date and the architecture of various periods deserves careful study. We return to the high road by a narrow lane.

We are now within about a mile and a half of Ingatestone, and the walk along the fine high road is through pretty country, well wooded. Ingatestone is a very pleasant little town. Morant, writing in 1768, says: "It is a great thoroughfare

from Harwich and Colchester, on which account the chief part of it consists of inns." At the present time the number is by no means abnormal. Wright, in 1836, remarks: "There was formerly a considerable market here, but it has wholly declined." There is now no market at all, but its discontinuance has not checked the growth of population, which at that time was 841, but now 2,012. There is a good church with a splendid brick tower. The chief feature of the interior is the series of beautiful monuments to the Petre family, several in alabaster; such exquisite workmanship is seldom found in a village church. One of the best is that of the Sir William Petre (*d.* 1572) of whom we have already spoken—the founder of the fortunes of the family. We see also that of the fourth Lord Petre (*d.* 1684), with the pathetic record "*inconcussa in adversis patientia.*" We saw that he died in the Tower, a victim of anti-papal fury.

Ingatestone Hall lies towards Buttsbury; it was built by Sir William Petre in 1565. We have here a literary association, for this is the Audley Court of Miss Braddon's excellent romance, "Lady Audley's Secret." This book was published in 1862—the 'sixties were a marvellous decade for good novels, when Dickens, Thackeray, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, Trollope, Meredith and Charles Reade were in full swing, to say nothing of Blackmore, Ouida, George A. Lawrence, R. S. Surtees and others—and probably it is still selling nearly as well as the inferior (but not bad) best-seller, "East Lynne," which came out a year earlier. There can be no doubt about the locality;

she places "Audley" upwards of six miles from Brentwood. It begins in the comfortable Victorian style. "Audley Court lay low down in a hollow, rich with fine old timber and fertile pastures." There is a detailed description: "A house that could never have been planned by any mortal architect, but must have been the handywork of that good old builder Time, who adding a room one year, and knocking down a room another year, toppling over now a chimney coeval with the Plantagenets, and setting up one in the style of the Tudors, shaking down a bit of Saxon wall there, and allowing a Norman arch to stand here; throwing in a row of high narrow windows in the reign of Queen Anne, and joining on a dining-room of the time of George III to a refectory that had been standing since the Conquest, had contrived to construct such a mansion as was not elsewhere to be met with in the county of Essex." Miss Braddon is tolerably correct in her description, for the site was originally occupied by the summer residence of the monks of Barking, and she mentions a priest's hole, which still exists in Ingatestone Hall.

At Ingatestone we may take the train to London. The walk is about nineteen miles, but it can be shortened by stopping at Chelmsford.

XVI

THE VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE AND THE HILLS BEYOND.

I

THE VILLAGES OF THE VALE

From Wantage Road railway station we turn our steps southward and take a lane to the right. In a few minutes we come to the village of Grove, through which flows the Letcombe Brook. It is said that the grass in this neighbourhood is better for racehorses than any other in England. We go through well-wooded country and cross the railway line, and come to the interesting village of Denchworth and note the old Fox Inn. The Hydes were formerly Lords of the Manor here and held land in the parish from very ancient times; the Manor House, now a farm, may be seen to the north-east of the church; it was built by a Hyde in the sixteenth century. It was this house that was visited by the ill-fated Amy Robsart, who was a friend of the Hydes, and she left it on her last ill-fated journey to Cumnor, which is not many miles distant.

In 1758 the lordship was sold to Worcester College, Oxford, and the living remains in its gift. A member of that College, the Rev. C. H. Tomlinson,

who was incumbent in Mid-Victorian days, wrote excellently on his parish. Unfortunately the church is kept locked, which is the more disappointing because it possesses a unique brass. The apparent date is only 1557, but it is a palimpsest which bears the date of 1333, and the inscription records the laying of the foundation stone of Bisham Abbey. The Church also contains a monument to Richard Lynch Cotton, long Provost of Worcester College.

We quote from the aforesaid Tomlinson for the topography of Denchworth: "It is traversed by four roads: the Hyde-way, leading to the old home of the Hydes at North Denchworth; the Wantage-way; the Milloway, leading to Goosey; and the Circourt-way, leading to Challow. At the junction of these roads, in the centre of the village, is an ancient pillar; originally, perhaps, a 'chipping' or cheapening cross, where the chapmen brought their wares to market. It is now much chipped and defaced."

We go westward, across the Land Brook, and reach the next parish. The few houses of Goosey are dotted round a very large village green; there is no reason why every village, which was subjected to any of the many Allotment Acts in the reign of George III, should not have a similar healthful open space; the greed of the enclosers stole the common from the goose in almost every case.

The Church of All Saints, far away to the left, is tiny but doubtless is large enough for the worshippers. Nothing is sadder or more invariable in English rural life than the steady diminution of

our village populations. Here is the record of the villages we visit on this tour :—

	Populations			
	1841	1871	1911	1921
Grove	485	547	590	618
Denchworth ..	246	232	182	179
Goosey	179	163	128	129
Baulking	193	203	190	164
Uffington	640	618	523	480
Woolstone	327	268	158	156
Kingstone Lisle ..	397	315	263	220
Sparsholt	506	462	335	286
Letcombe Bassett ..	293	262	174	161
Letcombe Regis ..	446	459	439	437
Fawley	280	232	176	192
East Garston ..	662	517	408	391
West Shefford ..	562	524	398	382

Goosey has actually the distinction of having added one to its population during the last ten years. With two exceptions, the group shows a large and steady decline in a period of eighty years. There is little doubt that the two others which have maintained their ground—Grove and Letcombe Regis—owe this to their vicinity to Wantage, which, one is glad to notice, is a prosperous and increasing little town. Probably the excellent grass has helped Grove.

It will be noticed that in the first thirty years the decrease is small. That was the period between the repeal of the Corn Laws and the time when cheap and rapid ocean transport revolutionised the food market. There is no doubt that for many years after the repeal, landlords, farmers and

labourers alike were better off. As Kingsley makes one of his characters say in "Two Years Ago"—"Cheap bread and high wages now; and instead of lands going out of cultivation as they threatened—bosh! there's a greater breadth down in wheat in the vale than ever there was; and look at the roots. Farmers must farm now, or sink; and, by George! they are farming, like sensible fellows; and a fig for that old turnip ghost of Protection!" But when the country was flooded with cheap American wheat and other foodstuffs, it became difficult to live by arable land. More and more pasture was laid down and rural depopulation set in.

We make our way westwards and pursue the long, straight, dull, flinty road to Baulking, coming out on a small and picturesque green. The Church of St. Nicholas is ancient and has several interesting features. We toil along to Uffington, and are glad to reach the White Horse Inn and luncheon.

Uffington is sacred to Tom Brown, i.e. Tom Hughes, the friend of Charles Kingsley and the author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays." His memorial may be seen in the Church of St. Mary, in which he is described as the "Friend of Religion, Liberty, and Co-operation." He was certainly one of the fine spirits of an age to which the problems of life appeared simpler than they do to us. He has described his environment and temperament in his dissertation on the Brown family. "This family training too, combined with their turn for combativeness, makes them eminently quixotic. They can't let anything alone which they think going wrong. They must speak their mind about

it, annoying all easy-going folk; and spend their time and money in having a tinker at it, however hopeless the job. It is an impossibility to a Brown to leave the most disreputable lame dog on the other side of a stile." So Kingsley, in his "Invitation" to "Tom," announces their intention to:

> "Do the work that's nearest,
> Though it's dull at whiles,
> Helping, when we meet them,
> Lame dogs over stiles."

All his life he was a knight errant, ever ready for a fight or a rescue. But it is as the author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays" that he has achieved immortality. The old Hall, where he was born, was demolished in his own lifetime, but the village has probably changed little, except by becoming smaller. There is "the splendid old cross church" of which his grandfather was Vicar; it is one of the most complete examples of Early English work among country churches. It is a cool and pleasant resting-place in the hot afternoon.

We walk along the vale and in about a mile and a half come to the little village of Woolstone, nestling under the hill, in a beautiful sylvan situation. A sparkling, tumbling brook flows through the midst of it; here is a comfortable little inn, conducted by the People's Refreshment House, where lodging may be obtained. The Church of All Saints is small and of considerable interest. Originally it was late Norman, and there are two good Norman doors; several of the windows are Decorated. There is a leaden

font with somewhat mysterious markings. There are said to be twenty-seven leaden fonts in England; they are commonest in Gloucestershire where eight examples are to be found.

After a night at the White Horse, a favourite sign here, we are ready to resume our journey. The road leads uphill, west of the church. We turn to the left and walk along in front of the White Horse. The merry brown hares are playing on the slope and the hills are sweet with new mown hay. We strike across country up the steep Dragon's Hill. This is described by Hughes as "a curious little round self-confident fellow, thrown forward from the range, and utterly unlike everything round him." Whether it was St. George or King George who killed the Dragon there, is not made clear by the local tradition. Like "George's good subjects, the Bloomsbury people" the balladists of the Vale seem to have confused them.

We come to the White Horse and walk from the tip of his tail to the end of his nose. The likeness to any modern horse is not striking. From the railway the effigy bears some resemblance to a dissipated crab, and here it looks far more like a greyhound than a horse. This monument, 374 feet long, is now in very good condition, and can be seen from a great distance. Like similar works in various counties, it has always baffled antiquarians. It is a curious fact that the unscientific archæologists of the eighteenth century almost invariably underestimated the age of the monuments which they investigated. Thus the Bartlow Tumuli, on the Cambridge-Essex border, were gravely described as Canute's thank-offering for

his victory over Edmund Ironsides, whereas they are at least 1,000 years older. Danish, Saxon, or Roman were their favourite epitaphs for all conspicuous features, even though they happened to be prehistoric.

We find in Hughes—in "Tom Brown" and the excellent "Scouring of the White Horse"—an enthusiastic identification of this place with a battleground of King Alfred. These hearty, joyous passages are actually omitted in some modern editions—reprints of the wonderful "Tom Brown" in this century are innumerable—as "learned and topographical detail, so bewildering to the juvenile mind!"

The Saxon attribution is fairly modern. In the reign of George II the Rev. Francis Wise produced a pamphlet with one of those lengthy titles in which that age delighted, suggesting that the White Horse "is a monument of the West Saxons, made in memory of a great Victory obtained over the Danes A.D. 871." This hypothesis, for some mysterious reason, was very ill received by several of the learned clergyman's contemporaries, and opposing tracts described his writings as "impertinence and imposture." The reasons given by Wise—that "Hannibal, long after the invention of books, engraved characters upon the Alpine rocks, as a testimony of his passage over them; which were remaining about two centuries ago, if we may believe Paulus Jovius"; that "the horse was the standard which the Saxons used"; and that the games on the White Horse Hill, still celebrated at intervals, were established in honour of the victory—are, of course, not very cogent, but

he was clearly a competent archæologist, according to the standard of his day, and it must be admitted that modern authorities, having disproved his contention, totally fail to explain the origin of this remarkable device in chalk.

Wise's opponent, who calls himself Philalethes Rusticus and who appears to have had the name of Bumpsted, treats him with great contempt and hopes that "I may add without Vanity, I have given him a fair fall upon his own Dunghill." His main argument was that the White Horse was the standard of Kent, not of King Alfred of Wessex. To do the uncourtly Bumpsted justice, he has got almost as near to the truth as our modern antiquarians, for he conjectures that "if the Horse were a standard or Banner, it was a British one," and that "this conjecture would be strengthened also by the Figure and Posture of the Horse in every Circumstance; which are exactly the same with what we may observe upon some British Coins in Speed."

As we saw, Hughes was delighted to adopt the Saxon and King Alfred theory from Wise; our grandfathers were much greater admirers of things and persons Teutonic than is the case with their descendants. He leads us over "sacred ground" where once, as he fancied, Saxon and Danish bones lay whitening. "After which crowning mercy, the pious King, that there might never be wanting a sign and a memorial to the countryside, carved out on the northern side of the chalk hill, under the camp, where it is almost precipitous, the great Saxon white horse, which he who will may see from the railway, and which gives its name to the

vale over which it has looked these thousand years and more."

It is true that Alfred and his brother King Ethelred, in 871, won a victory over the Danes somewhere on the Ashdown range, but it cannot have amounted to much, for, almost immediately afterwards, the brothers were defeated at Basing, and eventually the Saxons had to adopt the usual plan of paying the Danes to go away. It was considerably late, in 878, that Alfred decisively defeated the Danes at Westbury, where, strangely enough, is another chalk horse of mysterious origin.

The little that is known about our horse is summed up in the "Victoria County History," which fortunately is nearly complete as regards Berkshire. "The form of the horse's figure as represented on the ancient British coins is known to be a debased copy of the elegantly depicted animals represented on the beautiful pieces struck by Philip II of Macedon, but it shows, like the Uffington White Horse, a certain artistic power on the part of the ancient British artificers to whom both works may reasonably be attributed. . . . It is almost impossible to doubt that they [the figures cut in the chalk] were more or less intimately related to the religion of the ancient Britons. The periodical scourings or weedings to which the White Horses were subjected at a somewhat later date, and the cudgel-playing and other rural sports and festivities which always followed, may very well be the moden survivals of periodical religious gatherings when the inhabitants of the Vale met for religious rites or ceremonies." Thus is the astute Bumpsted justified, but Wise's theory

proved by far the more popular, and is still to be found in some of the guide-books and, till recently, was confirmed by the "Encyclopædia Britannica."

On the highest part of the hill stands Uffington Castle. The London clerk of Hughes's book, who attended the scouring of the White Horse was a good deal disappointed when he saw it. "I had half expected to see an old stone building with a moat, and round towers and battlements, and a great flag flying; . . . What do you think the Castle is? Up at the very top of the hill, above the White Horse, there is a great flat space, about as big as Lincoln's Inn Fields, only not the same shape, because it is only square on two sides. All round this space there is a bank of earth, eight or ten feet high in some places, but lower at others. . . . The banks and ditch are all grown over with turf, just like the rest of the downs, and there isn't even a single stone, much less a tower, to be seen, etc." The old fashioned antiquarians, of course, called it Roman or even Danish; in fact, Uffington Castle is one of the innumerable prehistoric earthworks of Great Britain.

On a clear day there is a noble view; it is said that eleven counties can be seen, but to-day a heat haze lies over the whole Vale, and there is not much to be seen.

"Look westward e'er we leave this specular mount," and we shall see, about a mile-and-a-half away, a large clump of trees on the crest of a gentle rise. That is Wayland Smith's Cave and thither we direct our steps.

We reach it by the grassy Icknield Way, which is still frequently, and absurdly, called Roman

—a long grass-grown track on which one may walk for miles in solitude. It is, of course, a highway of immemorial antiquity and the authorities have decided that the name has nothing to do with the Iceni, although the road comes from their country. Some topographers believe that traces of it can be discovered as far east as Thetford, but it is certainly in existence at Newmarket and it runs westwards by Royston, Baldock, near Hitchin, and by Dunstable. The track then inclines southward to Wendover and by Chinnor and Watlington to Streatley. Hence it is a glorious grass track, running almost due west, and we shall have many opportunities of treading it. After reaching Wiltshire, the end of the road becomes wrapped in mystery, and the traveller is pretty well at liberty to imagine himself upon the Icknield Way whenever he strikes a grassy lane. He may find himself pursuing it to Salisbury or Westbury. An excellent choice would be to consider it as passing through Avebury and thence to Bath. The fact that the Icknield Way passed through Icklingham in Suffolk, Ickleton in Cambridgeshire, and Ickleford in Hertfordshire, was triumphantly appealed to by the friends of the Iceni in support of their contention. But the science of philology is against them, and there are similar names in Middlesex and Sussex.

In the White Horse country it is a welcome relief from the hard high-roads. The Smithy lies a little to the right of our road among a fine clump of beeches. It is one of the most attractive spots in the whole district and, perhaps, as solitary as in the days of Amy Robsart. Sir Walter Scott,

who never visited the neighbourhood, picked up a vulgar local legend, mentioned by Gough, when he was "getting up" the subject matter of "Kenilworth." The real Wayland Smith is Vaolundr, a Norse hero, called by Andrew Lang the Dædalus of the North. He was both a skilled artificer and a maker of wings; he seems also to have been somewhat truculent.

The valuable Victoria County History gives us the following information about it; it is merely a sepulchral monument and how the Dædalus legend became associated with it, is not clear: "It is a gallery-dolman or chambered tumulus; that is, a sepulchral chamber or chambers approached by a passage or gallery, and originally covered by earth, constructed probably on the plan of the house of the period. As these structures are few in number they must be supposed to have contained the bones of a chieftain or person of high rank."

We retrace our steps and follow the Icknield Way along the south side of the range. At a convenient point, having ascertained from the map that this is nearest to Kingston Lisle, we make a short cut by striking to the left by a field of oats and soon come upon the main road, which we follow eastwards. We come to the Blowing Stone which is vividly described in "Tom Brown's Schooldays"; it is a disappointing affair. We make a slight divergence to the pretty and well-shaded village of Kingston Lisle. Lunch may be obtained at a People's Inn. There is a good church. There is some old glass; one panel displays the excellent motto—*Virtus in actione consistit.* As we journey on towards Wantage, we again turn aside to

Sparsholt—the Church of Holy Cross contains Norman work, but the chief features are the tombs and brasses. There is a priest's brass dating from about 1410 and there is also a tomb of the ancient Hyde family.

We then have a walk of fully three miles, which is rather fatiguing along the hard road, and we are glad to reach the flourishing little town of Wantage. Here we find comfortable quarters at The Bear and will rest and renew our journey on the morrow.

WANTAGE AND BEYOND.

II

WANTAGE, GREAT FAWLES, LAMBOURN, AND NEWBURY

WANTAGE is a pleasant little town. At one time it was noted for the manufacture of sacking, but this industry has long died out, and the only manufacture of importance is an iron and brass foundry which owes much of its prosperity to the late Lord Wantage. However, the most important local industry by far is the training of race-horses; the neighbouring downs afford admirable gallops. It was the birthplace of Alfred the Great, who had a palace here, but no ancient memorial of him worth mentioning survives. There is, however, a fine statue of the great King in the Market Place; this was the gift of Lord Wantage who was a munificent benefactor to the place from which he took his title.

Wantage was also the birthplace of Joseph Butler, who was born in a house called the Priory which survives. Three of the greatest of English Churchmen—Laud, Butler, and the saintly William Law, were all the sons of tradesmen and born in small Midland towns. Butler, however, is a most elusive personality, and however much we attempt to grasp it, we can get nothing but a few vague

anecdotes, such as—" he loved to walk alone, and walk at night." Certainly Wantage has no associations with him, nor he with Wantage.

The market-place is a spacious and cheerful place, perhaps larger than the present needs of the town. Almost adjoining it is the beautiful church. There are few better in Berkshire and it is extremely well kept. There are good brasses and monuments to members of the Fitz-Warine family. One of the former, a priest's brass, is attributed to 1320 and is probably the oldest brass in the county. Altogether Wantage is an extremely pleasant town.

After a night's rest we resume our travels. We have now done with the Vale of the White Horse and our object is to make the acquaintance of the Downs on the other side and discover their literary associations. It is but a short walk south-westwards to the considerable village of Letcombe Regis. It is a pleasant, shady place and, unlike almost all its neighbours, is increasing in population, but there is little to detain us except the church, which has several points of interest. We climb the steep hill to Letcombe Bassett, which lies some two miles to the south. This is the Cresscombe of " Jude the Obscure " ; it was here that Jude first met Arabella. The tiny stream of Letcombe flows through the village and produces abundant watercress—hence the name bestowed upon it by Mr. Hardy. The Letcombe also facilitated Arabella's work—" On the further side of the stream stood a small homestead, having a garden and pig-sties attached ; in front of it, beside the brook, three young women were kneeling, with buckets and platters beside them containing

heaps of pigs' chitterlings, which they were washing in the running water." With Wantage (Alfredstown) we entered the extreme north of Mr. Hardy's Wessex proper; indeed, it is only in "Jude" that he has ventured so far north.

Of the prettily situated church a few Norman details survive. Like many of the churches in the neighbourhood, it has a good font; this belongs to the Early English structure which was imposed upon the first building. The Rectory of Letcombe Bassett has an association with Dean Swift. At a time most momentous in the history of England and his own life—June, 1714—Swift retired hither for three months on a visit to his friend John Geree, who was then Rector. Swift calls him "an honest clergyman of my old acquaintance." He was watching his friends the Tories slowly lose their grip on affairs and the increasing illness of Queen Anne and the vacillations of Oxford, who was then at the head of affairs, all pointed to the establishment in power of the hated Whigs, which would be detrimental to all the public objects he had at heart and, for his private part, would restrict him to the Deanery of St. Patrick, which he rightly thought most inadequate preferment. All these evils actually happened during his stay at Letcombe Bassett.

At first the Dean desired nothing but tranquillity. "I have gone through my share of malice and danger, and will be as quiet the rest of my days as I can." He was certainly far from the busy hum of men—even now no main road runs through the village, which is five miles from the nearest railway station. News came through slowly; he

heard of the death of the Princess Sophia over a mug of ale. This item probably did not distress him much. Whether Sophia or her son George ruled over England, the result would be equally unfavourable to his hopes, and probably he would have greatly preferred the Pretender to either, if he could only have obtained satisfactory terms for the Church of England. Sophia, who was eighty-four, the sister of the gallant Prince Rupert, nevertheless had hoped to outlive Queen Anne. "If," she said, "I could but live to have Sophia, 'Queen of England,' engraved on my tomb, I should die content." But Anne contrived to defy her diseases—brought on by over-eating and drinking—several months longer.

As Tom D'Urfey very sensibly said:

> "The crown's far too weighty
> For shoulders of eighty."

For this doggerel Anne, who was by no means pleased with her kinswoman for anticipating her death, is said to have given him fifty guineas.

Swift, of course, could not keep out of politics long. He remarks: "I have a mind to be very angry, and to let my anger break out in some manner that will not please them at the end of a pen." He accordingly wrote "Some Free Thoughts upon the Present State of Affairs," a short but incisive pamphlet in which he rebukes the feebleness of the administration. "A ship's crew," he says, "quarrelling in a storm, or while their enemies are within gunshot, is but a faint idea of the fatal infatuation." He declares that "the only way of securing the Constitution of Church

and State" is "by lessening the power of our domestic adversaries [i.e. the Whigs] as much as can possibly consist with the lenity of our Goverment." Swift boldy urged that George of Hanover should not be acknowledged as successor without conditions, but that "his Electoral Highness should declare himself entirely satisfied with all her Majesty's proceedings, her treaties of peace and commerce, her alliances abroad, her choice of ministers at home." The immense influence which Swift then possessed is shown by the entreaties which Lady Masham made him not to go away to Ireland and desert the Queen.

But although the energetic Bolingbroke succeeded in displacing the lethargic Oxford, the stroke of fate baffled the well laid schemes of Swift. Anne died on August 1st, and George I became king without conditions, and the Whigs had an innings of fifty years. Swift went direct from Letcombe Bassett to Ireland, and England saw little more of him.

We now continue to explore the territory of the obscure Jude. We proceed over the hill, noticing the great earthwork called Letcombe Castle or Sedgbury Camp, which we may inspect, though it is only another edition of Uffington Castle. It has a fine vallum and fosse and is mentioned by Hearne, the famous antiquary; apparently we know about as much of its origin and history as he did.

We then march eastward along the Icknield Way and at last come to a most interesting spot—the Red House. The building, which is called the Brown House by Mr. Hardy, has in itself

nothing remarkable except for being an episode in Jude's history. However much the latter part of the book may decline into pessimism and ugliness surely the first eleven chapters are the writer's masterpiece—how the peasant boy yearns for knowledge, how he sees Oxford from the Brown House, and plans to get books and study and go to the magic city, and how disappointment and disillusion come. The high vantage ground is thus described: "At the very top it was crossed at right angles by a green 'ridgeway'—the Icknield Street and original Roman road through the district. This ancient track ran east and west for many miles, and down almost to within living memory had been used for driving flocks and herds to fairs and markets. But it was now neglected and overgrown." It was from the top of Brown (Red) House, at sunset, that Jude looked in the direction of Oxford where "points of light like the topaz gleamed." His patient gaze was at last rewarded: "The air increased in transparency with the lapse of minutes, till the topaz points showed themselves to be the vanes, windows, wet roof slates, and other shining spots upon the spires, domes, freestone-work, and varied outlines that were faintly revealed. It was Christminster, unquestionably; either directly seen, or miraged in the peculiar atmosphere."

We now follow the great high road southwards downhill and "by a little clump of trees" turn down the lane to the right. We soon come to the "wide and lonely depression in the general level of the upland," where little Jude desisted from his task of scaring the rooks in order to *feed* these

voracious birds. "Eat, then, my dear little birdies, and make a good meal!" he said, and was soundly thrashed by the farmer for his pains. One can hardly regard Farmer Troutham's irritation as other than natural and justified. The urchin was being paid 6d. a day (a considerable wage at that time and place) to defend valuable property from the birds, and he actually invited them to make a feast at his employer's expense on the very insufficient ground that "Farmer Troutham can afford to let you have some." The truth is that the sentimentalist is the most cruel of all human beings. Jude, who "could scarcely bear to see trees cut down or lopped, from a fancy that it hurt them," drifted helplessly through a short life to a miserable death, leaving behind him a train of murder, suicide, and general horror such as Caligula could hardly have achieved in that humble station. So Robespierre is said, in his earlier days, to have resigned his magistracy because he "could scarely bear" to pass the death sentence on malefactors.

We soon come to the village of Great Fawley—which, of course, suggested Jude's surname—called Marygreen by Mr. Hardy. It may be remarked in passing that a topographer most absurdly identifies Marygreen with Lambourn, although the place is described as "the little village, or rather hamlet of Marygreen." And Lambourn is a market town! All the details correspond most minutely; we may see "the draw-well at the edge of the greensward," and the cottage where Aunt Drusilla kept her little shop. "Within the little lead panes of the window—this

being one of the few old houses left—were five bottles of sweets, and three buns on a plate of the willow pattern." We may also see the modern church. Mr. Hardy laments over the old building. "The original church, hump-backed, wood turreted, and quaintly hipped, had been taken down, and either cracked up into heaps of road metal in the lane, or utilised as pig-sty walls, garden seats, guard-stones to fences, and rockeries in the flower-beds of the neighbourhood. In place of it a tall new building of modern Gothic design, unfamiliar to English eyes, had been erected on a new piece of ground by a certain obliterator of historic records who had run down from London and back in a day. The site whereon so long had stood the ancient temple to the Christian divinities was not even recorded on the green and level grass-plot that had immemorially been the churchyard, the obliterated graves being commemorated by eighteenpenny cast-iron crosses warranted to last five years." The present church was designed by Street in 1866 and is by no means a bad piece of architecture. A few of the ancient monuments have been preserved. It is quite possible that the building was in such a neglected and dilapidated state as to necessitate its demolition. It is useless to look for the "lonely roadside cottage between the Brown House and Marygreen," where Jude and Arabella first set up house, for it was destroyed by fire many years ago.

We have thus exhausted the "Wessex" points of interest in this neighbourhood. We may now take a delightful walk of six or seven miles over the downs to Lambourn, in the course of which we

pass an old race-course, laid out both for flat-racing and steeplechasing. Lambourn is a dull little town compared to Wantage, having in fact hardly a street or other feature to make it worthy the name of town. It has a literary association in being probably the Whitbury of Charles Kingsley's "Two Years Ago." Possibly this book does not nowadays number many readers, but though badly constructed, it contains many good things, and, like all the works of both the Kingsleys, is an open air book. It is true that the correspondence of fact and fiction is not very close, and probably Kingsley did not wish for a close identification. He gives Whitbury a railway which Lambourn did not possess until many years after the author's death, and represents the place as considerably larger than little Lambourn really is, so that Newbury is in some respects a more likely attribution. But geographically Whitbury must be Lambourn—"the Whit [Lambourn], now flowing clearer and clearer as we approach its springs among the lofty downs."

The description is not very distinctive, but it suits Lambourn fairly well: "Pleasant old town which slopes down the hillside to the old church—just 'restored'" [and what a restoration!]. . . . "Pleasant churchyard round it, where the dead lie looking up to the bright, southern sun, among huge black yews, upon their knoll of white chalk above the ancient stream. Pleasant white wooden bridge, with its row of urchins dropping flints upon the noses of elephantine trout. . . . Pleasant new national schools at the bridge end, whither the urchins scamper at the sound of the

two o'clock bell." Lambourn, like Wantage, is a great training centre; probably at the present time there are more horses in training in this neighbourhood than at Wantage. Otherwise the place does not display much activity. It always was a remote place, and even now the roads and railway are not important enough to bring much traffic. Leland, in the reign of Henry VIII, called it "Chepinge Lamburne," and described it as "a poore Friday market." Almost the only thing that interested him here was the sight of "a greate warren of conies longginge unto Mastar Estesex"—which is his way of spelling Essex.

Failing the "conies," we have practically nothing to see but the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, a fine building but neither as beautiful nor as well kept as that of Wantage. It was, as Kingsley noted, restored in 1849 (badly) and several times since; in one of these the energetic Street, known to us at Fawley, took a hand. Lambourn is grateful to its benefactors, for we note a very handsome tomb to John Eastbury, who in the reign of Henry VII founded almshouses which still exist. There are also good alabaster effigies of Sir Thomas Essex—probably the son of Master Essex who owned the conies—and his wife. Other interesting monuments may be seen in the church.

Having exhausted the attractions of Lambourn, we may make our way to Newbury. If in lazy mood, we may go the whole way by train, but a better course is to walk part of the way, as each village has a station and the walk may be lengthened or shortened at pleasure. There are no very striking features, but the route, near the

Lambourn, is pleasant, and each village has its old church.

Newbury, though a thriving and well built town, has not much interest apart from its race-course and the battle-fields. Like St. Albans, the town can boast of two battles but neither of them were decisive.

In September, 1643, Essex, the Parliamentary Commander, was returning to London after a successful expedition in the West. On Enborne Heath, south of the town, the King and Prince Rupert attempted to cut him off. A fierce fight took place of which the chief feature was the resolution with which the London train-bands repelled a charge of Rupert's horse. Night fell without a definite result, but the fruits of victory ought to have gone to the Royalists as they still barred the way to London. But Charles, who could never stick to one plan, withdrew his forces in the night and allowed Essex to retreat to London unmolested. Had the King held his ground, it is possible that the army of Essex would have been compelled to surrender for lack of provisions and the war might have ended at that early stage.

Several noblemen of note fell on the King's side in this action—the Earl of Sunderland, the Earl of Carnarvon, and above all Lord Falkland. He is one of the many persons whose reputations we have to take on trust, for he was acclaimed by his contemporaries as one of the wonders of the world,* and yet he never did, or said, or wrote

* Thus Cowley wrote:—

"How could he answer't, if the State saw fit
To question a monoply of wit?"

anything which would appear to justify their enthusiasm. His was a cross-bench mind, which was ever ready to act the part of the candid friend, and it is astonishing to notice how often those people are beloved in public life, whereas they are detested in private. But Falkland was equally beloved by his personal associates and those whom he encountered in his public career, and he receives uniform eulogy from all historians. He must have had some secret of personal charm which caused his friends to translate all his *posse* into *esse*.

He died in circumstances that are hardly distinguishable from suicide. He was told not to go through a gap until it had been widened, but took no notice of the advice and, galloping through, was shot down. This has happened such countless times to English officers that it might be regarded as a perfectly normal incident, but we learn from Clarendon and other authorities that Falkland had long been in a moody and depressed state, deploring the war which was raging "to the horror of all good men." He had said that morning that he would "be out of it ere night." So it may be that, like Thyrsis, he "of his own will went away."

Near the spot where he fell a fine obelisk has been erected in memory of those who fell for the King, and especially of Falkland. The excellent phrases of the inscription (due to the scholarly Lord Carnarvon, a man not unlike Falkland in character) is a refreshing contrast to the partisan and Puritan stuff which used to be forced down the throats of school children. The justice and necessity of the war is rightly celebrated

"by those to whom the Majesty of the Crown and the Liberties of their Country are dear."

The second battle was in October, 1644. By this time the tide had begun to turn against the King and this battle was the occasion of measures which rapidly led to his complete defeat. Charles had been manœuvring in the neighbourhood, chiefly with the object of relieving the famous Basing House which had long been hard pressed by the enemy. Being threatened by the Parliamentarians, he took up a position north-east of Newbury near Speen, and here he was attacked by Manchester to whom Cromwell was second in command. Manchester had a fairly good opportunity of annihilating the Royalist forces, but he was so dilatory and half-hearted, both during the battle and in the later muddling operations, that Charles escaped with ease. Cromwell and the more vigorous spirits had long been dissatisfied with the conduct of affairs.

Accordingly a council of war was held in which frank criticisms were uttered. The difference in point of view was vividly brought out by an altercation between Manchester and Cromwell. Manchester said: "If we beat the King ninety and nine times, yet he is King still, and so will his posterity be after him; but if the King beat us once we shall all be hanged, and our posterity made slaves." To this Cromwell very reasonably replied: "My lord, if this be so, why did we take up arms at first? This is against fighting ever hereafter. If so, let us make peace, be it never so base." The result was that the New Model Army was formed and a real Commander-in-Chief

appointed in Fairfax, and, except Cromwell, no Member of Parliament was allowed to hold a commission. This increased efficiency soon secured victory. It is the old story—a lesson learned in every war at the cost of much bloodshed, i.e. the necessity of committing the whole war into the hands of one competent and trusted chief, and also of warning off all politicians from interference in the conduct of military affairs.

With Newbury our walk comes to an end. It has given us four days of beautiful and interesting country and the distances have been so moderate as to be within the compass of any able-bodied person.

XVII

THE SUSSEX DOWNS

BARNHAM, SLINDON, AND EARTHAM

The Sussex Downs are the delight of all who love rambles. Mr. Kipling and Mr. Belloc have celebrated the charms of South Sussex and of the great hills that stand along the sea. There, they tell us, is the place for a man to set up his abode. Says Mr. Kipling:

> "Each to his choice, and I rejoice
> The lot has fallen to me
> In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
> Yea, Sussex by the sea!"

The Downs run like a wall from Beachy Head till they leave the county in the west to pass into Hampshire.

As rule they are smooth and bare—

> "Clear of officious fence or hedge,
> Half-wild and wholly tame,
> The wise turf cloaks the while cliff edge,
> As when the Romans came."

But sometimes they are crowned with beechwood, as in the neighbourhood of Midhurst. Mr. Belloc says:

"I never get beneath the pines
But I smell the Sussex air;
Nor I never come on a belt of sand
But my home is there
And along the sky the line of the Downs
So noble and so bare."

One may wander far without meeting a soul, and a visitor to Bognor or one of the other bustling watering-places which lie at their feet a few miles away on the edge of the flat land, must be struck by the contrast.

Barnham Junction is on the main line, several miles east of Chichester. The small Norman Church is at a little distance from the village; there are several features about the building which make it worth a visit. There is a doleful epitaph in the churchyard beginning:

"Pain was my portion, physic was my food,
Fits was my disorder, drugs did me good."

On leaving the station we turn sharp to the right and follow the lane that leads towards Yapton for nearly a mile. Then, being bound for Walberton, we strike a footpath to the left at a cottage, and make our way to the village over the open fields. The well-wooded Downs lie in front. The path leads into the churchyard; the church has the characteristic Sussex shingled spire, and much of it is of hoary antiquity, the nave and massive tub-front being Norman. Here in the eighteenth century—the Golden Age of easy-going clergymen—an eccentric Parson Dorset was once Vicar, who

had the candour to tell his flock: "Do as I say, not as I do." The place and easy code of ethics evidently agreed with him, for he held the living from 1759–1802.

Bearing to the left through the village, we soon take a lane to the right uphill. We pass Walberton House, in a large park, "the large and commodious mansion now occupied by Mr. Prime, was built by him about the year 1817 from the design and under the superintendence of R. Smirke, Esq." This Robert (afterwards Sir Robert) Smirke was the architect of the British Museum.

Then we cross the main road from Chichester to Brighton and continue the easy ascent to Slindon. This village straggles pleasantly uphill towards the crest and enjoys a glorious sea view, but has lost much of its detachment from the world, for public motor conveyances now bring trippers to Slindon Woods. The beeches here are certainly very fine; Mr. E. V. Lucas pronounces them: "among the aristocracy of trees." The Church of St. Mary (the dedication is very common in this neighbourhood) has traces of Norman work, but its most interesting feature is the quaint timber effigy of a knight, belonging to early Tudor times. According to an excellent authority, the pioneer of cricket lived here when George II was king. He was one Richard Newland, who taught his art to Nyren of Hambledon, who taught it to the famous Hambledon eleven, and thus first-class cricket was evolved.

Passing through the village in a westerly direction, we circle round Slindon House, a beautiful Elizabethan mansion; on its site stood a very

ancient palace of the Archbishops of Canterbury, where Stephen Langton died in 1228. We go downhill through the noble beech woods, while a valley in the Downs opens out on our right. Our lane bears uphill again into a road, and by turning to the right we reach the tiny village of Eartham in less than a mile. It stands near the Roman Stane Street, which can still be traced from Chichester to Epsom Downs, where the rest of its course to London is lost.

Eartham House was occupied successively by the small poet William Hayley and Huskisson, the statesman and economist. The estate had been bought by Hayley's father, and in about 1773, the younger Hayley, having failed at the Bar and as a playwright, came to live in retirement at Eartham. Like Mr. Snodgrass, he was "reputed a great poet among his friends and acquaintances," but there the resemblance ends, for it certainly cannot be said that "we do not find that he has ever written anything to encourage the belief." Indeed Hayley would write "anything" on any occasion, being a most voluminous versifier, and, what is much stranger, he had a considerable reputation in the world of letters. He was, of course, flattered by the poverty of the opposition; at a time when James Beattie was reckoned a considerable poet, there appeared to be room for Hayley in the Temple of Fame. As Macaulay remarked, "poetry had fallen into such utter decay that Mr. Hayley was thought a great poet."

And yet Thackeray tells us, "To have your name mentioned by Gibbon, is like having it

written on the dome of St. Peter's. Pilgrims from all the world admire and behold it." Now Hayley has acquired this fame, and there is no doubt that Gibbon admired him and called him "that amiable man and elegant poet." With much complacency he transcribes in his "Autobiography" several copies of verse which Hayley, who modestly called himself "an English sparrow," wrote in praise of the History. Pedestrian though they were, these effusions pleased the great man. England is bidden to "exult," for—

> "Science for thee a *Newton* raised;
> For thy renown a *Shakespeare* blazed,
> Lord of the drama's sphere!
> In different fields to equal praise
> See History now thy *GIBBON* raise
> To shine without a peer!"

But Hayley has a more legitimate claim to our affection and gratitude in that he befriended a man who was almost the only real poet writing in England in those lean years. In August, 1792, he persuaded Cowper to leave the watery Ouse for the breezy Sussex Downs, and the poet duly arrived accompanied by Mrs. Unwin, pleased at having escaped all "terrors" on the journey.

From Eartham the real poet wrote a number of his inimitable letters. Cowper was a thorough stay-at-home; the journey from Weston Underwood in Buckinghamshire was almost the longest he had ever taken, and the "mountains" of Sussex were the highest he had ever seen. He wrote—"I indeed myself was a little daunted by the tremendous height of the Sussex hills, in

comparison of which all that I had ever seen elsewhere are dwarfs."

At Eartham Cowper met Charlotte Smith, a forgotten novelist, and Romney, to whom he sat for his portrait. He says: "Romney has drawn me in crayons, and in the opinion of all here, with his best hand, and with the most exact resemblance possible." He pays both Hayley and Romney a graceful compliment in a sonnet. Remarking with some surprise that "symptons none of woe" appear in the portrait, he finds an explanation—

"For in my looks what sorrow could'st thou see,
When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?"

At first he delighted in the "elegant mansion" and the fine view of the Isle of Wight, but later began to hanker after the tamer scenery round about Weston Underwood and Olney. "Here" he says, "I see from every window woods like forests, and hills like mountains." However, he spent here some six busy and happy weeks, translating Milton's Latin poems and writing a little occasional verse.

There can be no doubt that if Cowper had seen more of people like Hayley—the epithet "amiable" was justly and unanimously applied to him—and less of such appalling people as Teedon, to say nothing of Newton, he would have gone down to his grave in peace, but Eartham was his final flicker. The shadows rapidly closed round him after his return home, and the ministrations of Hayley and Lady Hesketh were of no avail,—"no light propitious shone." He slowly sank into an

unfathomable depth of religious depression, and died saying—"I feel unutterable despair."

"Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum."

The other great light of Eartham is William Huskisson. In 1800 a certain Dr. Gem died and bequeathed his property to Huskisson. Included in it was a mortgage on Eartham House, and Hayley—whose pecuniary embarrassments, at least, were in keeping with the poetic character—was obliged to make it over to the mortgagee. Huskisson married the daughter of an Admiral Milbanke and thus is connected with Lady Byron's family.

Huskisson had a better grasp of economics than any statesman of his day. He made a great reputation by his speech on the repeal of the silk duties. He took in 1824 the first steps in a journey towards Free Trade, which lasted forty years, and ended in the complete liberation of commerce and industry, thus giving England a fiscal position almost unique in the world. To his influence very probably we may ascribe Palmerston's firm adherence to Free Trade principles, of which we have been lately reminded by Mr. Guedalla. Palmerston had a great admiration for Huskisson, and when, owing to a misunderstanding with the Duke of Wellington, the latter left the Coalition Cabinet, the loyal Pam followed Huskisson into the wilderness. At that time, to all appearance, the Duke of Wellington's administration was founded upon a rock, and Palmerston might seem to be risking his political career. However, Palmerston always fell upon his feet, and contrived to spend nearly his whole life in office. "Before

I was born," said Bright, "he sat on the Treasury Bench."

Huskisson's end was tragic. He went in 1830 with a large and distinguished company to attend the opening of the railway from Liverpool to Manchester. The velocity of the new invention had not then been realised, and when the train conveying the visitors stopped, they got out and strolled upon the line. Huskisson saw the Duke of Wellington, with whom his relations had been strained since the resignation, and hastened towards him with the intention of making up the quarrel. At that moment another train came rapidly along the other line. The passengers scrambled into their carriages, but Huskisson, who was totally devoid of bodily agility, lost his balance and fell back on the line. He received terrible injuries from which he died the same night.

The invaluable Greville gives us the best commentary on the life and character of Huskisson, describing his death as "a very great and irreparable loss." He adds: "I do not think he was looked upon as more than a second-rate man till his speeches on the silk trade and the shipping interest, but when he became President of the Board of Trade he devoted himself with indefatigable application to the maturing and reducing to practice those commercial improvements with which his name is associated, and to which he owes all his glory and most of his unpopularity. It is equally true that all the ablest men in the country coincide with him and that the mass of the community are persuaded that his plans are mischievous to the last degree." Greville also says that Lord

Melbourne, who was the shrewdest judge of character of his day, declared that Huskisson was the greatest practical statesman he had ever known, the one who best united theory with practice.

Huskisson was buried in Liverpool, but there is a memorial tablet to him in Eartham Church. Here also is a fine monument by Flaxman to Thomas Hayley, the son of William; he died at the age of twenty. We notice also a monument to Sir John Milbanke, V.C., who was killed at the Dardanelles; the connection between the Milbanke and Huskisson families has already been mentioned.

From Eartham we retrace our steps, but, instead of turning towards Slindon, keep on through woods and fields to the next turning to the left, which should be taken. Following this we reach a place locally known as Day's Stables, and here emerge again on the Chichester road. Almost immediately a signpost directs us to a road on the right leading to Eastergate and Barnham. Here is an interesting little church with Norman work. At the growing village of Eastergate we turn to the left and follow a road which shows signs of developing into villadom.

The question of rural population is extremely interesting; we shall find it an almost invariable rule that every village which depends upon agriculture has long been dwindling, and that a growth in population only occurs in places that are becoming residential. Thus all the villages which we have visited to-day, being within easy reach of the coast and suitable as places of residence for the

middle classes, are increasing, as the following figures will show :—

	1801	1841	1911	1921
Barnham ..	124	125	299	314
Walberton ..	502	561	586	662
Slindon	374	544	503	546
Eartham.. ..	114	117	135	158
Eastergate ..	163	208	606	749

We notice that Eastergate, which early in the nineteenth century was quite small, is now easily the largest, thanks to villadom.

We soon find ourselves back again at Barnham Junction. The walk is about nine miles.

XVIII

THE COBDEN COUNTRY

HEYSHOTT, THE LAVINGTONS, MIDHURST, AND COCKING

We make our start from Petworth railway station. Petworth itself, which we hope on some future occasion to visit, along with many other delightful places in the neighbourhood, lies far away to the north. Here the Little Rother is crossed by two bridges and a large flour mill stands on the bank of the stream. We take the Chichester high-road which leads uphill over the first outlying range of the South Downs. On the summit we note a tumulus. The village of Duncton lies near the bottom of the ridge; the church is modern, but its situation is beautiful, for it looks across the valley to Duncton and Barlavington Downs, the former of which (837 ft.) is the highest point in the South Downs. The early morning (January) was wet, but now the sun is struggling out, gold and amber clouds lie high above the hills, and every feature of the landscape is clearer than it often is in summer.

A little further on we come to the gates of Lavington House—the grounds are open to the public. We follow the broad gravelled drive for a considerable distance, and see the house in front

of us, a large, white, two storeyed building, well situated on high ground with an aspect full south. It was built by John Sergeant. Samuel Wilberforce married Emily Sergeant, and on her death he inherited this fine estate. It was his favourite home. He writes: "I was up alone on the hillside between six and seven this morning, and anything more lovely you cannot conceive." When he died from a fall from his horse when riding near Dorking, his family declined an offer to bury him in Westminster Abbey, knowing that it was his wish to be laid by the side of his wife in the little church of Woolavington.

We turn to the left and pass through the Brown Gate; a lane to the right takes us to the church which is within a stone's throw of the great house. In it are brasses to Bishop Wilberforce and his wife and also his episcopal staff. The building, which is Early English, contains a fine copy of Raphael's "Marriage of the Virgin," presented by Lord Woolavington. It was here that Manning, then Archdeacon of Chichester, afterwards Cardinal, preached his last sermon as an Anglican priest, just before his secession to Rome. Manning and Wilberforce had married sisters. Mrs. Manning was dead but his brother-in-law's defection was a severe blow to Wilberforce and to other High Churchmen. We return to the park and pass in front of the house. Woolavington has now a sporting association, for it gives the title of Baron to Sir James Buchanan, one of the most munificent and successful patrons of the Turf. Among many other good horses, he owns Coronach, the winner of last year's Derby and St. Leger. We see in the

distance a paddock in which thoroughbreds are grazing.

Passing out of the park we enter the village of Graffham. The church with its shingled spire is like many others which dot these hills and vales; its chief interest is the Norman tub font. Towards the end of the village, which, supplemented by many new houses, is of considerable extent, we turn up a lane to the left and make our way after a longish walk through the hamlet of Woodcote to Heyshott, a pretty village fringing a large common.

We are now in the parish where Richard Cobden was born. Heyshott extends over 2,184 acres, mostly pasture, woodland, or common. In Cobden's youth, a hundred years ago, it had a population of 358, now the inhabitants number 322. The church like many others in Sussex has a Norman font; but its chief interest for visitors is the pew where Richard Cobden and his family worshipped. From Heyshott Church to Dunford, Cobden's birthplace, is nearly a mile; part of the way is by footpath. As we approach it, we see on a small hill to the right Oatscroft, the property of Cobden's only surviving daughter, wife of Mr. Fisher Unwin, the well-known publisher. Dunford is interesting and charming, the property is well wooded and intersected by a delightful stream. Here in an old farmhouse Richard Cobden was born on June 3rd, 1804. The room in which he was born is the only part of the original structure which survives—"the room," he wrote in 1847, "where I now sleep is the one in which I first drew breath." The farm was the property of his grand-

father, a maltster and farmer of moderate prosperity, but Cobden's father came to grief, and he sold Dunford, first removing nearer to Midhurst, and then into Hampshire. The love of his native place was strong in Cobden, and after the success of the Anti-Corn Law League he was enabled to regain possession of the old farm. Some years afterwards when he was speaking at Aylesbury, he was heckled about his landed property. He said: "I possess a small estate in West Sussex, of about 140 acres in extent, and a considerable part of it in wood. It is situated in a purely farming district . . . the land is inferior; it has no advantages; it is nearly ten miles distant from a railroad." He went on to explain the circumstances in which he acquired it. "I am indebted for that estate, and I am proud here to acknowledge it, to the bounty of my countrymen. That estate was the scene of my birth and of my infancy; it was the property of my ancestors; it is by the munificence of my countrymen that this small estate, which had been alienated by my father from necessity, has again come into my hands, and that I am enabled to light up again the hearth of my fathers; and I say that there is no warrior duke who owns a vast domain by the vote of the imperial parliament who holds his property by a more honourable title than that by which I possess mine."

In fact, Cobden's devotion to the Corn Law agitation, in which he and Bright were the leading and indefatigable spirits, had compelled him to neglect his business, and the eve of his political triumph found him in financial difficulties. But

a number of friends and admirers headed by John Thomasson of Bolton subscribed to a testimonial, which amounted to the large sum of £80,000, and thus he was enabled not only to continue his public life as an advocate of peace and good will among nations but also to repurchase and rebuild the home of his ancestors. Cobden writes with great pleasure about his property in 1850. He says: "It is an old farmhouse, which had for many years been turned into labourers' cottages. With the aid of the whitewasher and carpenter, we have made a comfortable weatherproof retreat for summer; and we are surrounded with pleasant woods, and within a couple of miles of the summit of the South Down hills, where we have the finest air and some of the prettiest views in England." The church was in a ruinous state; the parson and landlord were non-resident. There was no school, except just such a one as is described in Dickens's "Great Expectations." From the details Cobden gives about village life and especially the poverty of the peasants, any reader may gather—here as elsewhere—that we have no reason to envy the life of our grandfathers, whether in country or town.

Eventually the house was entirely rebuilt by Cobden. It is a large white stucco building of two storeys, except where the line is interrupted by a plain square tower. The drive leads uphill and the lawn in front of the house, which faces south, is sloping; it is dotted with yews and rhododendrons. At the west end of the building there is a conservatory. The remains of the old house are embodied in a room at the back. The views well deserve

the praise given them by Cobden; for the house stands at the prettiest end of the parish and the Downs and woods display themselves on every side. We are, indeed, on the edge of some of the finest parts of Sussex, where the South Downs are hurrying to meet the North Downs in Hampshire, and the Weald narrows as they converge; thus all the characteristic Sussex scenery is seen at close quarters. It is finely described at the beginning of Morley's "Life of Cobden."

We pursue our journey up the lane and soon reach Cocking Causeway on the Chichester high road—this is a considerable distance from the village of Cocking. Here is the Cobden Memorial, a large stone obelisk in a commanding position. It was set up in 1868 and bears the simple inscription, "Richard Cobden."

West Lavington church, nearly a mile to the north-east, was built about the time Cobden bought Dunford; the architect was Butterfield and the architecture is commonplace. But the churchyard is charming, on the slope of a steep hill which descends to the valley where the Chichester Road runs southwards. This quiet Sussex graveyard is a fitting resting-place for the famous statesman who was also a Sussex yeoman. It is visible from the grounds of Dunford where he was born.

It was an April day in 1865 when John Bright came to pay the last sad offices to his friend. He was a pall-bearer with Gladstone, Pelham Villiers, Milner Gibson, and others. Of the large gathering of politicians who attended one only survives (1927) Lord Eversley, then Mr. Shaw Lefevre. Bright

says: "The Church is new and very nice; everything around it seems arranged to please the eye. The landscape is very charming, and the sunshine seemed to fight against the sorrow in our hearts." Later, he wrote in his journal, "As I looked into that vault at Lavington, it seemed to me that half my public life was buried there."

The tomb, to the south of the building, although of good workmanship and kept in perfect condition, is as plain and simple as the inscription. His son, his wife, and a daughter lie by his side.

> "Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
> Morn of toil, nor night of waking."

Cobden died in harness; he had long been feeling the need of rest after an anxious and busy life. Morley relates that early in March Bright came down to Midhurst. "Cobden now occasionally ventured out into the air during the middle of the day, and he and Mr. Bright took easy walks together on the terrace at Dunford or in the lanes. On one occasion, looking in the direction of the church, Cobden said, 'My boy is buried there, and it will not be long before I am there with him.' It was, indeed, little more than a month."

In the House of Commons Palmerston and Disraeli, who, though sharply opposed to him on several vital issues, had always had a high admiration for his ability and integrity (and indeed both had, on occasion, modified their policy in the direction of Cobdenite principles), spoke some graceful words in his honour, and Disraeli added: "There are, indeed, I may say, some members of Parliament, who though they may not be present,

are still members of this House, are independent of dissolutions, of the caprices of constituencies, and even of the course of time. I think that Mr. Cobden was one of these men." Bright, who had been his close friend for twenty-five years, rose but could only utter a few broken sentences and sat down saying that he would leave to "some calmer moment" his estimate of the life and character of his friend.

Even seventeen years later the wound was not healed. In 1882 he wrote in his journal: "There seems not a single friend of mine with whom I can consult. My dear friend Cobden! How often have I wished him here for his counsel and help!" The occasion for a public panegyric came in 1877, when Bright unveiled the Cobden statue at Bradford. He ended an eloquent passage with the words: "He is gone; but his character, his deeds, his life, his example, remain a possession to us his countrymen. And let this be said of him for generations to come, as long as the great men of England are spoken of in the English language; let it be said of him that Richard Cobden gave the labours of a life that he might confer upon his countrymen perfect freedom of industry, and with it, not that blessing only, but its attendant blessings of peace and plenty."

We pass along to Midhurst, about a mile distant —"the quiet little close borough," as Cobden calls it. It returned two members to the House of Commons from the time of Edward II, and lost one in 1832, and shed its last in 1885. As the borough had only 1,478 inhabitants when its representation was first cut down, it ought to have

considered that it had a good run for its population. Its inhabitants now number 1,890. Like most rotten boroughs, it has had distinguished representation. In 1768 Midhurst (quite illegally) elected Charles James Fox, aged twenty, his father and uncle having bought it for their sons. In the Peace of the Augustans there were rich rewards for those who were in the swim.

Midhurst, like almost every small inland town of Sussex, is extremely pretty. Except for the number of old houses and inns, there is not much to detain us. The Grammar School was founded by one Gilbert Hannam in 1672 and it early acquired a high reputation; it is still flourishing. Probably Cobden would have been much more comfortable there than at the Dotheboys Hall in Yorkshire to which he was most wrongfully sent. Sir Charles Lyell (1797–1875), the illustrious geologist, was educated here.

The "lion" of Midhurst is Cowdray Park and House, which are adjacent to the town. The ancient great house was built by the Earl of Southampton and his brother Sir Anthony Browne out of the plunder of the religious houses. Several of the splendid Browne monuments are in Easebourne Church hard by. A scrap of history connected with the House may here be given. In 1540 Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, was placed in custody here, under the charge of the Earl of Southampton, and only emerged thence into the Tower, where she was executed at the age of nearly seventy. Our friend Froude indulges in long special pleading to justify this act of his beloved Henry and advances propositions which, as

Macaulay might say, "would excite amazement in a den of robbers." He sagely remarks that there is no proof of the Countess's guilt, but, on the other hand, *there is no proof of her innocence.* It does not need a pilgrimage to Simancas to know that the poor lady was murdered because she was the daughter of the Duke of Clarence and because her son Reginald was stirring up trouble against Henry on the Continent. The fine house was destroyed by fire in the eighteenth century, but the ruined remains are impressive; there is a modern residence on the estate which now belongs to Lord Cowdray.

Our walk might end here; but if we feel energetic, we can prolong it to Cocking, noticing, as we approach the village, a small public house with the sign of the Cobden Head. Cobden is one of the prophets who is honoured in his own country; besides the obelisk there is a Cobden Institute at Heyshott. At Cocking we take the train to Chichester after a walk of fully fourteen miles.

XIX

COUNTRY OF JANE AUSTEN

STEVENTON, CHAWTON, AND WINCHESTER

THE homes of Jane Austen must be taken in triplicate, for she lived and died in three different parts of Hampshire, each separated by a considerable distance one from the other. Steventon, her birthplace, may be conveniently visited from Basingstoke. This is a busy little town on the main line of the Southern Railway, and in the mind of Jane Austen it was principally associated with dancing. She writes to Cassandra in 1800 of "the Basingstoke ball," and when dances at assembly Rooms are mentioned, we may usually understand that Basingstoke is the scene. It is only seven miles from Steventon and apparently dances were held there once a month.

A lady, who has written a useful topographical work on this subject, professes to have discovered the ancient Assembly Rooms—at the back of the Angel Hotel. It may be so, but all that can be said is that it doesn't look like it.* The buildings in question are stables, and it is difficult to imagine their providing a large dancing hall. Doubtless

* There is evidence that one at least of the balls was held in Basingstoke Town Hall.

those who got up the balls often encountered the difficulties experienced by the Hartfield people when they decided to use the Crown. Mr. Woodhouse thought that "a room at an inn was always damp and dangerous, never properly aired, or fit to be inhabited." It was distressingly dirty, as Mrs. Weston discovered. "'Emma,' said she, 'this paper is worse than I expected. Look! in places you see it is dreadfully dirty: and the wainscot is more yellow and forlorn than anything one could have imagined.'" There was, however, the consolation that "Men never know when things are dirty or not."

Jane seldom writes a letter without mentioning dancing. There seems to have been little difficulty in finding partners for the ladies—unlike early twentieth century days. She writes: "Our ball was very thin, but by no means unpleasant. There were thirty-one people, and only eleven ladies out of the number, and but five single women in the room." She added: "There were twenty dances, and I danced them all, and without any fatigue. I was glad to find myself capable of dancing so much, and with so much satisfaction as I did." It was usually not hard to induce the men to dance, though occasionally there was a proud Mr. Darcy. Mrs. Mitford, the mother of the novelist, lived at Asche, not far away, and her opinion of Jane is on record. The daughter remarks "Mamma says that she was then the prettiest, silliest, most husband-hunting butterfly she ever remembers." Certainly the letters are full of gossip and deal largely with dancing and flirtations, but Mrs. Mitford left Asche when Jane

was a child and probably her verdict was coloured by recollections of the Lydias and Mariannes and other huntresses who appear so frequently in the novels. It must be remembered that in those days a girl would have been disliked and reproved if she had taken an interest in serious subjects. And from all we can gather about Jane she was an extremely sensible young woman and apparently averse to matrimony, for she had several chances which she did not accept.

We take the not very interesting Andover road and within two miles reach the commonplace village of Worting. Here the walk becomes more entertaining. We take the Roman Road, at right angles, and pursue it southwards; this was the way from *Calleva Atrabatum* or Silchester to *Venta Belgarum* or Winchester, and many Roman remains have been unearthed near it, at North Waltham, for instance, through which we shall shortly pass. This road is not, like many, a grass track; though narrow, it is still in use and presents a formidable appearance to the pedestrian, pursuing its straight and apparently interminable course over hill after hill. After a considerable distance, almost all up hill, we come out on the Winchester road. The country is well timbered.

It is a relief to turn from the crowded high road into the road which leads to North Waltham and Steventon. A walk of a mile takes us to the first named—a pleasant village scattered about smaller valleys, and then there is more uphill work before we reach Steventon. Steventon is a pretty village, but it is important that the traveller should not be in too great a hurry to reach it. As he comes

to it down the hill, he should look out for a carriage-road on his left with a sign, "To Steventon Manor." This is nearly a mile from the village and it would be a sad waste of time not to take Jane Austen's birthplace first. The road runs uphill through a park, and before long we reach the church and the Manor House. The question—"Why don't people go to Church?" here admits of a simple answer; it is a mile and a half from the village and there is not a single intervening house. The church is kept locked, which is unfortunate as it has tablets to the Austens.

Jane Austen's father was Rector of Steventon and the neighbouring Deane; it may be noted that this kind of plurality is again coming into vogue, the truth being that nowadays very many parishes do not afford either enough pay or enough work for one man. Here she was born on December 16th, 1775. As has often been explained, the old Rectory was pulled down long ago, but there are obvious traces of it in the uneven grassy sward near the church. Miss Austen in her novels only describes the kind of country familiar to her. Steventon Manor, like Northanger Abbey, is "shut off by knolls of old trees, or luxuriant plantations, and the steep woody hills rising behind to give it shelter." Indeed, as one strolls about the neighbourhood, one cannot help noticing that far more woodland is here encountered than in the New Forest. Jane loved trees and "shrubberies," which were convenient for walks and flirtations, and in one of her letters from Steventon laments the destruction of her elms by a storm.

Her niece gives an attractive picture of the

Rectory garden. "On the sunny side was a shrubbery and flower garden, with a terrace walk of turf which communicated by a small gate with what was termed the 'wood walk,' a path winding through clumps of underwood and overhung by tall elm trees, skirting the upper side of the home meadows. The lower bow-window which looked so cheerfully into the sunny garden and up the middle grass walk bordered with strawberries, to the sundial at the end, was that of my grandfather's study, his own exclusive property, safe from the bustle of all household cares."

It was here that "Sense and Sensibility" "Pride and Prejudice" and "Northanger Abbey" were in part written. She writes long afterwards to her sister: "The caution observed at Steventon with regard to the possession of the book is an agreeable surprise to me, and I heartily wish it may be the means of saving you from anything unpleasant—but you must prepare for the neighbourhood being perhaps already informed of there being such a work in the world." As we have already seen, it would have caused a bad impression in Hampshire circles had it transpired that a lady had any intellectual pursuits, and we know that she was most anxious to conceal her authorship. We are told: "She had no separate study; she worked in the family sitting-room, undisturbed by the conversation, or the various occupations going on around her, and subjected to all kinds of interruptions. She wrote at a little mahogany writing-desk, on small pieces of paper, which could easily be put aside, or covered with blotting-paper at the sight of visitors."

"Pride and Prejudice" was, in fact, begun and finished at Steventon; "Sense and Sensibility," begun earlier in a tentative form, was not finished till some years later at Chawton. "Pride and Prejudice" is her first completed novel and it is surely one of the most remarkable instances on record of an author reaching maturity at a bound with the first work. If not the best of all, the book has never been denied by any competent critic to be among the very finest of her works. It was written by a girl barely twenty-two, who had spent her whole life in Hampshire and the adjoining counties, with perhaps one visit to London.

Probably Meryton, which offered to Wickham "the prospect of constant society, and good society" was very like Basingstoke and doubtless Jane had seen in the assembly room several fastidious Darcys—"So high and so conceited, that there was no enduring him! He walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so very great! Not handsome enough to dance with!" And let us hope that the Bingleys were not uncommon, who "had soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room: he was lively and unreserved, danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early." As for the Kittys and Lydias who "could not be at home half a day before they were in pursuit of officers," they must have been legion. Miss Austen made the most of her opportunities. Indeed this is implied in the conversation of Elizabeth, her favourite heroine, "as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print," who had remarked that intricate characters are the most

amusing. "'The country,' said Darcy, 'can in general supply but few subjects for such a study. In a country neighbourhood you move in a very confined and unvarying society.'" To this Elizabeth replied: "'But people themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed in them for ever.'" We know from her letters that her keen eye missed nothing and thus "in a very confined and unvarying society" she was able to create Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, Lady Catherine de Bourg and the egregious Mr. Collins.

"Sense and Sensibility," although finished later than "Pride and Prejudice," is really a tentative work; probably the authoress never overcame the immaturity of the first draught which was her first serious attempt. It is undoubtedly the weakest of them all; though the character-drawing shows promise, there are no figures to compare with the best Austenian, except Mr. and Mrs. John Dashwood and the vulgar Mrs. Jennings. Though the first to appear, it did not "get itself published" till 1811, and it seems to have been as successful as any—we know that Jane received £150 for it.

The scene is laid chiefly in Devonshire, but Jane, who is fond of describing scenery with economy of touch, really makes Hampshire do duty. Mrs. Dashwood's little house had a good situation. "High hills rose immediately behind, and at no great distance on each side; some of which were open downs, the others cultivated and woody." This combination of wood and down is far more Hampshire than Devonian, and it may be added that the hills of Hampshire reach 1,000 feet in height. The same may be said of Mrs. Jennings's

description of a larger property. "Then there is a dovecote, some delightful stew-ponds, and a very pretty canal; and everything, in short, that one could wish for; and, moreover, it is close to the church, and only a quarter of a mile from a turnpike road, so 'tis never dull, for if you only go and sit up in an old yew arbour behind the house, you may see all the carriages that pass along." The Basingstoke Canal is "a very pretty canal," and turnpike roads are much more conspicuous in Hampshire than in Devonshire. Steventon lies midway between two great roads—the London-Salisbury and the London-Southampton. Undoubtedly Jane Austen made good use of her experience at Steventon; the Hampshire Rectory, the Hampshire country town, and the Hampshire country society are the foundation of all her works. But she made use of every place that came under her notice.

The family left Steventon in 1801, and Jane lived for some years at Bath and Southampton, but these places can hardly be called her homes; her characters always live in the country and diversify their quiet life with occasional trips to Bath, London, or the seaside. It is believed that she was very sorry to leave Steventon and it is even said that she fainted away when the sudden project of removal was announced to her. Some kind friends suggested that the motive of Mr. Austen's migration was to separate her from a certain James Digweed who had designs upon her. There is no evidence for this beyond the fact that Jane sometimes danced with him, and it is probable that we shall have to remain content with the

shadowy information which we possess about her love affairs, for the Austens were not a gushing family.

No doubt, like Macaulay, her affections were stronger than her passions. According to Charlotte Brontë, her most unsympathetic and maladroit critic, "The passions are perfectly unknown to her. She rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood." But the depth is better than the tumult of the soul and the Austen comedy has worn better than the Brontë melodrama.

We know, at any rate, that Jane soon became reconciled to the prospect of Bath. In the January before the departure she writes: "I get more and more reconciled to the idea of our removal. We have lived long enough in this neighbourhood; the Basingstoke balls are certainly on the decline, there is something interesting in the bustle of going away, and the prospect of spending future summers by the sea or in Wales is very delightful." Certainly the novels would be poorer without Bath.

With her Bath and Southampton homes we have no concern. Having seen Steventon we may make our way, according to our convenience, to Overton or Oakley railway stations. The abundance of woodland is the best feature of the walk, but Hampshire is inferior to all its neighbours in charm. However, this neighbourhood has afforded us a longish and tolerably interesting walk.

The next Hampshire home is Chawton which is far more accessible than Steventon. The bright little town of Alton is easily reached by rail from anywhere, and the cottage at Chawton is not much

more than a mile away—a distance within Jane's moderate walking capacity. As we walk westward along the main road, which makes practically the whole of Alton, we may imagine Jane frequently walking backwards and forwards on this road; doubtless nearly all her shopping was done at Alton. She writes: "I had just left off writing and put on my things for walking to Alton, when Anna and her friend Harriet called in their way thither, so we went together. Their business was to provide mourning against the King's death, and my mother has had a bombazin bought for her. I am not sorry to be back again, for the young ladies had a great deal to do, and without much method in doing it." We know from "Emma" that another Harriet was equally tiresome at Highbury. As it happened, poor old King George survived Miss Austen by several years.

The cottage—at the west end of the village—is easily found; it bears the following inscription: "Jane Austen lived here from 1809–1817 and here all her works were sent into the world. Her admirers in this country and in America have united to erect this tablet. Such art as hers can never grow old." The red-brick building is two-storied with dormer windows. It is said to have been built for an inn and even now it has what looks to be the remains of a sign hanging over the doorway; this, however, is due to its having once served as a village club; recently a good modern building has been erected for that purpose, and the house now has a humble appearance, being divided into tenements, while the garden, once Jane's delight, is cut up into allotments.

It must have been a charming village and is still beautiful, but a less pleasant place of residence than in the days when coaches and chaises were welcome objects on the road, an antidote to boredom in Mrs. Jennings's opinion. The house stands on the very spot where the great highway forks, the left branch going to Winchester, and the right to Gosport, and hooligans on motor-cycles rush through every minute, regardless of the clearly printed request to drive slowly, and also making the day hideous with wilful din from their engines. It should be said that most of the owners of motor-cars are more considerate.

Jane was much pleased with the cottage and it is generally supposed that she was happier here than ever before. Her father having died, she lived at Chawton with her mother and her dear sister Cassandra. They shared the sitting-room where Jane worked at her novels, when there were no visitors. The garden must have been delightful and well deserving the praise bestowed upon it by all who saw it; though now the produce is mostly potatoes, there are many good trees in it, including two fine yews, which must have been flourishing in Jane's days. She writes: "You cannot imagine—it is not in human nature to imagine—what a nice walk we have round the orchard. The row of beech look very well indeed, and so does the young quickset hedge in the garden. I hear to-day that an apricot has been detected on one of the trees." In the month of May she writes: "Our young piony at the foot of the fir-tree has just blown and looks very handsome, and the whole of the shrubbery border will soon be very

gay with pinks and sweet-williams, in addition to the columbines already in bloom. The syringas, too, are coming out. We are likely to have a great crop of Orleans plumbs, but not many greengages." It will be noticed that her spelling possesses peculiarities; for example, she always calls her young feminine relatives *neices*.

As we leave the village and continue westwards towards the church, we are struck with the beauty and verdure of the valley. The Church is practically in the grounds of the Manor House—a fine Elizabethan structure. With this she had a close connection, for her brother Edward (he had taken the name of Knight) had succeeded to this estate by adoption, and, though residing chiefly in Kent, he often stayed here. For more than 300 years this property has been held by the Knights.

The Church of St. Nicholas is quite modern, having been burned down and rebuilt some fifty years ago. Some of the monuments have been preserved, including a very fine white marble effigy of Sir Richard Knight of Charles II's time. But in the vestry there is a tablet, overlooked by all biographers and topographers, which has a much more intimate connection with the novelist. This is a plain white marble tablet commemorating Cassandra Austen, her mother, who died in 1827, and Cassandra, her sister, who died unmarried in 1845. Jane's name does not appear because she predeceased her mother.

"Northanger Abbey" has really no connection with Chawton. This sparkling work was drafted at Steventon about 1798 and revised a few years

later, but, after undergoing various adventures, it remained unpublished till after her death. It came out, bound up with "Persuasion" in 1818. Of this book we note that Catherine Morland's home was a Wiltshire village eight or nine miles from Salisbury, while the Abbey itself was probably in Somerset. But, as usual, the scenery is that of Hampshire or any of the Home Counties.

The years at Chawton were the most fruitful in her literary work; she seems to have been unable to compose away from home, for when she was at Bath and Southampton her activities were almost completely suspended.* As the tablet indicates, she did not begin to publish till she came to Chawton. In a few years she had become, in a modest way, a well known novelist, and was to receive warm praise from the *Quarterly*, i.e. Sir Walter Scott. After her death Archbishop Whately wrote a well known criticism in the same review. It should also be said that in her lifetime the Prince Regent, a great admirer of her novels, requested that "Emma" should be dedicated to him. George IV, with all his faults, was almost the only English sovereign since the days of Charles I who gave any considerable encouragement to literature or art.

"Mansfield Park" is chiefly laid in Northamptonshire."

"Emma" is in Surrey and the action never shifts further away than Box Hill. There are the best of reasons for supposing Highbury to be Leatherhead, but Jane is very sparing of descriptions of

* Godmersham, where she worked at "Mansfield Park" and "Emma," was equivalent to a home.

scenery in "Emma;" the characters absorb her whole attention.

In "Persuasion" the Elliots and Musgroves live in Somerset, and Bath figures largely, but the book for Tennyson and all other readers is chiefly associated with Lyme Regis and the wild thrills of being "jumped down" the Cobb. Nothing so "sensational" as Louisa Musgrove's accident is to be found elsewhere in any of the six volumes and it has duly impressed the world. "This is the house where they brought the poor young lady," said a Lyme lodging-house keeper.

We leave Chawton with a pleasant picture of Jane, her house, and garden. The secret of the greatness of her art is that she thoroughly understood her material and knew exactly how to use it. The vicarage, the hall, the garden, the shrubbery, the neighbouring county town, were her province and she kept to them.

We return to Alton. It is perhaps unfortunate that we have not time to take in Holybourne, only a mile and half away, for there died another woman novelist, whose touch in describing the life of villages and small country towns is hardly less delicate than that of the incomparable Jane. Mrs. Gaskell, in the last year of her life, wishing for a relief from smoky Manchester, bought The Lawn at Holybourne, "a large, detached house, standing at some little distance from the main road, well shaded with thick fir-trees, and with a beautiful garden and a little brook—a tributary of the Wey—meandering through the grounds. The stream is crossed by a pretty wooden bridge, connecting the lawn and flower garden with the

orchard beyond." She had bought it with the proceeds of her masterpicee, "Wives and Daughters," and intended it for a Christmas present to her husband, but in the autumn of that year she died suddenly at The Lawn while taking tea with her daughters. However, it is as well to keep to one subject, and our next care is Winchester, the scene of Jane Austen's death.

For nearly a year she had been ailing and she often remarks in her letters on the difficulty she experienced in getting about; she procured a donkey to enable her to accompany Cassandra in their rambles. At last it was considered necessary that she should have better medical advice than could be obtained from the "apothecary" who figures so largely in the novels. So on May 24th, 1817, she went to Winchester with her sister Cassandra.

A pleasant way to visit this ancient and royal city is to take the train from Southampton and alight at Shawford, where we pass over a steep hill by a golf course and descend into the charming, shady village of Compton. Here again one may regret that it is not part of our plan to visit the neighbouring village of Otterbourne, where lived and died another lady, far indeed from being of the same class as the two of Alton, but she was no mean literary artist. Charlotte Yonge's "Daisy Chain" and its sequels introduce us to a delightful family, and William Morris and others considered that the reading of the "Heir of Redcliffe" was an epoch in their lives.

Compton is pretty enough to linger in and the quaint-looking church with its dovecote-like tower ought to be visited. This Church of All Saints

was originally built in the latter part of the twelfth century and enlarged in 1905, but, contrary to the frequent practice, nothing in the old building was marred or destroyed. In the chancel are the remains of a very ancient mural painting representing a saint. Some have supposed that he was St. Swithun, but enough has been deciphered to show that *Theo* was an ingredient in his name.

We take the excellent Roman road, leading from Southampton to Winchester, and soon see in the distance before us the squat tower of St. Cross Hospital. This lies a mile to the south of the town and contains some of the most superb Norman work imaginable. Here again is an association with Mrs. Gaskell, who describes the "great square of velvet lawn, intersected diagonally with broad flag-paved walks, the same kind of walk going all round the quadrangle." It is a pathetic scene in "Sylvia's Lovers" where Philip Hepburn, the poor broken marine, returns friendless to England and for a time became a bedesman at the Hospital. It has been a charitable foundation ever since the days of Henry I. But neither Hospital, nor Cathedral, nor any of the other glories of Winchester are our present concern, but only Jane Austen, and we hurry away to the town, only not forgetting to take the excellent ale and bread which some pious founder has bequeathed for wayfarers. This is not "*offered* to every weary traveller," but anyone who asks for it may have it.

Passing by the Cathedral we go through the fine King's Gate and find ourselves in College Street—the last scene in Jane's life. It was at

No. 8 that she spent the last two months of her life under the loving care of Cassandra. The situation is very pleasant; the house has an oriel window and adjoins a large and ancient building belonging to the College. It is marked by a tablet. This nearness to the famous College would be welcome to her, as several of her nephews had been members of it. At first she wrote of her improvement and hopes of recovery, but her malady—unspecified—was soon seen to be beyond the doctor's skill, and she wrote of the kindness of those who attended her and her regret that she was not strong enough to welcome visitors. Only three days before she died, her sense of fun triumphed over her pain and weakness and she wrote a copy of merry verses on a subject which the journalists every July beat out fine. It is supposed that Saint Swithun disapproved of the Winchester races and therefore cursed them with a plague of rain.

The verses conclude:

"These races, and revels, and dissolute measures,
With which you're debasing a neighbouring plain;
Let them stand—you shall meet with a curse in your pleasures.
Set off for the course. I'll pursue with my rain.

You cannot but know my command o'er July;
Thenceforward I'll triumph in showing my powers;
Shift your race as you will, it shall never be dry,
The curse upon Venta is July in showers."

On July 18th she died.

Macaulay said: "If I could get materials, I really would write a short life of that wonderful woman, and raise a little money to put up a monument to her in Winchester Cathedral." His wish has now been carried out, for, besides the plain slab under which she lies in the north aisle of the glorious Cathedral, a brass tablet has been placed on the wall with the following inscription: "Jane Austen, known to many by her writings, endeared to her family by the varied charms of her character, and ennobled by Christian faith and piety, was born at Steventon in the county of Hants, December, 1775, and buried in the Cathedral July 24th, 1817. 'She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.' Prov. XXXI, 26."

We have thus seen her three Hampshire homes, the Steventon of her youth, the Chawton of her period of authorship, and the Winchester of her death. "Her place," a critic wrote, "is among the Immortals, but the pedestal is erected in a quiet niche of the great temple."

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